Brier-Patch Philosophy

By
"Peter Rabbit"

William J. Long

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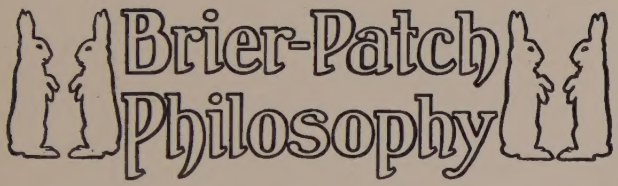
Brier-Patch
Philosophy

"Lives in a brier patch"

Brier-Patch Philosophy

By

"Peter Rabbit"

Interpreted by

William J. Long

Illustrated by

Charles Copeland

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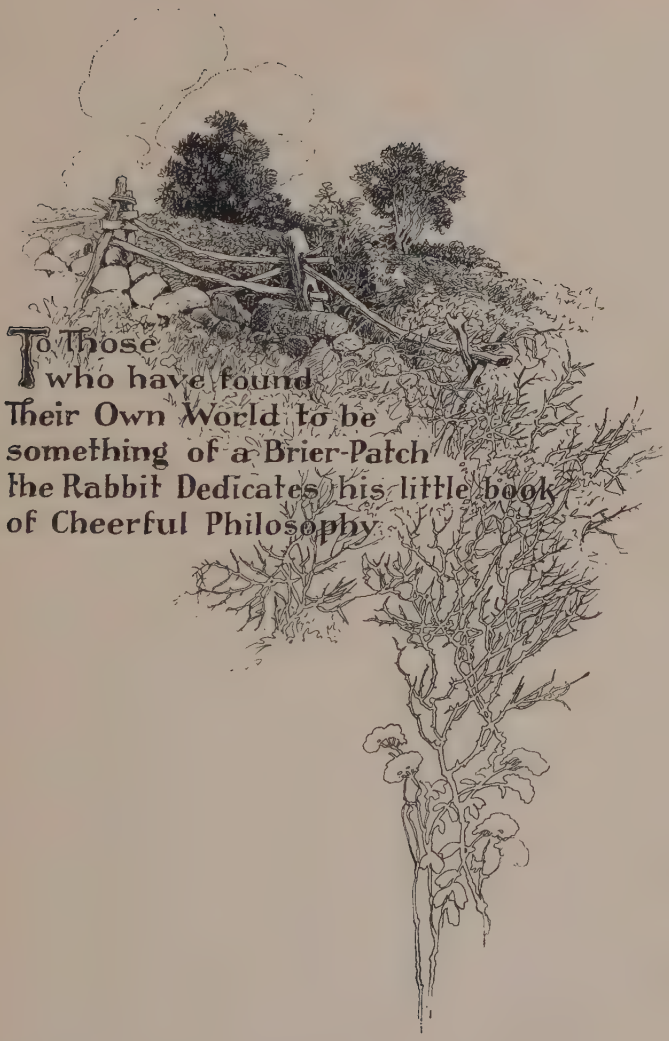

To those
who have found
Their Own World to be
something of a Brier-Patch
the Rabbit Dedicates his little book
of Cheerful Philosophy

Preface

Introducing the Rabbit and his Philosophy

AS we take the path to the brier patch let me assure you, first of all, that the Rabbit's book is not an argument, but an invitation, — such an invitation as a little brook in the big woods extends to all those who have ears to hear. It gives you water to drink, sings you a little song, points out a shady and most inviting seat, and suggests in its own irresistible way that you might find it pleasant to sit down and dream, and think, and rest awhile. Suddenly, like a strange child looking up from her lonely play, the little brook says to you, "You don't know my name; *you* can't tell where I come from, nor whither I am going so fast"; and at the unexpected challenge you arise to follow a louder tinkle of music that is calling you persistently to

come and see. There you find a waterfall among the mossy stones, and a dark pool where little trout are hiding like shadows under the foam bubbles; and there a distant flash of silver among the leaves and hemlock boughs beckons you to wider waters that are waiting to welcome you, down yonder under the mountains. So, almost unconsciously, your steps or your loitering thoughts are led pleasantly onward, from the little brook to the big river, and from the river to the far-off sea.

Just so, if you consider the smallest life, or even linger a moment by the Rabbit's sunny brier patch, you may be persuaded at first that there are some pleasant things concerning animals and men, and life and death, that you have not yet taken into your philosophy. Then, if you care to follow the Rabbit's trail, as you follow the little brook, he will take you through the dead timber of science, through thickets of reason and psychology, through the open country of instincts and habits and dawning intelligence, to the origin of natural religion and the distant glimpses of immortality, in which we are all interested.

Should you ask where a simple rabbit, who is supposed to follow only the pleasant ways of

nature, obtained all these luminous views of a larger life and philosophy, that would be a very difficult question to answer. Many of them came to him, undoubtedly, from our own great thinkers, others from the stars and the still night, and yet others he probably found in his own soul, where Emerson found a reason for the *Rhodora*, without quite knowing why or how they came there. For he quoted one day:

> Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose?
> I never thought to ask. I never knew;
> But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
> The selfsame Power that brought me there
> brought you.

If we find some of these views at variance or even in direct contrast with our own, that is probably because we learn chiefly from life itself, and the Rabbit's life is more simple and artless than ours. As he says himself, he prefers going barefoot to wearing uncomfortable shoes; to get quickly at the crisp heart of a carrot, rather than rasp his tongue over the dry husk or the peppery top; and to be in harmony with the brier patch as it is, rather than be perpetually fretted because he cannot understand why it should not be otherwise.

He has learned in the brier patch that a mercy may be none the less merciful because it happens to be pointed and to require careful handling. If he sometimes amuses himself with the scientists and psychologists who think they know all about his mental processes, and pokes fun at our cherished habits, and finds entertainment even in the mighty hunters who kill a little thing with a big gun and then discourse earnestly of the manly-virtuous quality of their recreation, that is because he has made the curious discovery that men are often most amusing when they take themselves most seriously. With humor a rabbit may hope to investigate even human society and keep his mental balance; without it he tumbles into the depths with Schopenhauer and finds no good in anything. It is a rule, in the brier patch, to smile when tears or impotent curses are the only possible alternative; and any woman who has passed thirty, if you can ever again get her to say what she thinks, will tell you that this is excellent philosophy.

We have followed the path far enough by this time for you to understand that, unlike the "Peter-Rabbit" beloved of little people, this is not an animal story or a book for children. Though more

or less disguised, it is nevertheless an effort to understand the common life of animals and men, and to be reasonably cheerful about both. The character of the Rabbit is assumed in order to look at every doubtful question in an impersonal way, and to avoid as far as possible all prejudices and purely habitual opinions, which, far more than our lack of observation, are the cause of so many irrational theories of a reasonable universe. To be open-minded rather than positive, to suggest rather than demonstrate, is probably the Rabbit's ideal. He will be well content if the reader find here some things that are not written plainly on the surface, and some unexpected suggestion, like a blazed tree in the wilderness, that may make even a little clearer the unknown way of life and death.

WILLIAM J. LONG

STAMFORD, CONN., June, 1906

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THERE is this difference between a man and a rabbit: the rabbit lives in a brier patch, and his philosophy makes his little world a good place; the man lives in an excellent world, and by his philosophy generally makes it over into the worst kind of a brier patch, either for himself or for his neighbors.

To begin at the beginning of our peculiar differences — since your philosophers tell us that the only thing we are sure about is our own thought — there is the question, now vexing all your scientists and psychologists, as to whether or not animals think. Now the rabbits find only a pleasant cud of contemplation in such a question; but with men the case is altogether different. Instead of chewing the cud of contemplation and finding some pleasant nourishment therein, they take irritably to the process which your street urchins describe as "chewing the rag" of discontent. Psychologists who experiment with caged monkeys contemptuously declare that there is nothing whatever between a rabbit's ears except reflex action; naturalists who

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can see only instinct at work in the woods and fields intimate that those who can see more are deficient either in soul or body; whereupon lovers of dogs and pets rise up indignantly to assert that they *know* their particular animals think, because they have seen them do many things which it would be quite impossible for men to do without thinking. So instead of philosophy, which considers all things and holds fast what is good, there is a veritable bullbrier thicket growing up wild among you.

Whimsically enough, while you are asking the question, Do animals think? the French biologists are repeating the same question concerning yourselves. They hold, with some show of reasonableness, that what you call thinking is only a matter of cell changes, and that all your boasted psychology will presently be a small department of physiological chemistry. You do not think; you are simply a victim of reactions; therefore why should you ask such an absurd question concerning other animals? So the Rabbit finds a grain of humor, as well as philosophy, in the situation.

Now while the Rabbit's knowledge of animals leads him to the opinion that, in a twilight kind of way, they do think and reason, the object of the present meditation is not to establish the proposition. First, like Descartes and Hume and all other animals, the Rabbit knows surely only what goes

on in his own head, and all knowledge of what goes on in other creatures' heads is purely an inference from their actions. The Rabbit has seen your men at a political ratification-meeting, and your women wildly enthusiastic over a queer genius making awful sounds on a piano; and mercifully he suspends his judgment. If he were to judge you *en masse*, as you judge animals, by the political meeting, or the concert, or a baby show, or a panic, or a crowd in the subway, he would declare instantly with the French biologists that men do not think, that they are victims of somewhat hysterical reactions. So, since we must infer the mental processes of animals from their individual actions, we must first watch them without prejudice, to see what they do, before reaching our conclusion. We must read the numerous records of those naturalists who study, not caged monkeys, but the wild animals that earn their own living, whose wits are sharpened by daily experience amid dangers; and it might be well also to sift the enormous number of observations which have not yet found their way into the books, and which point steadily to a kind of elementary reasoning among the lower orders.

Then there is the question of terms, which ought to be defined sharply before we argue about them. Unfortunately, thought and reason have shadowy edges and refuse to be bounded by walls and lines,

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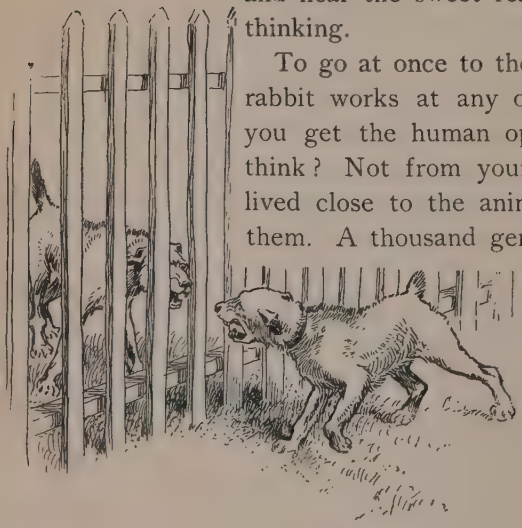
like a garden of carrots, or a stupid triangle that you can understand perfectly. Downward they vanish gradually into unknown depths, upward into unscaled heights. So we would speedily find ourselves disputing about names, instead of talking pleasantly about animals. Now people who dispute about names — about creeds and shibboleths which they do not understand, and principles which sometimes turn out to be only prejudices — always remind the Rabbit of two dogs barking savagely at each other from opposite sides of the same picket-fence, until some humorous fellow goes and opens the gate between them; whereupon they approach each other stiffly, and then go away trying to look as if they had forgotten something. And indeed they had forgotten, each the other fellow's viewpoint. The Rabbit has no desire to hunt in such a garden of thistles. The object of this meditation is not to define and argue and demonstrate, but just to invite you cheerily to linger awhile in the sunshine by the brier patch and hear the sweet reasonableness of our way of thinking.



To go at once to the root of the question, as a rabbit works at any obstinate carrot, where did you get the human opinion that animals do not think? Not from your ancestors, certainly, who lived close to the animals and knew most about them. A thousand generations of these primitive

men, hunters and animal keepers, held invariably, as shown by their religion and folk-lore and burial customs, that Two Legs and Four Legs were much alike in their mental processes, the animals having simply less of the same thoughts and feelings that animated the hunters who followed them. There came a time, however, when your fathers became scientific; they wanted to know exact facts and classifications. Now exact facts are impossible in regard to thoughts; and souls, or minds, or whatever you choose to call the permanent reality within you, refuse to be classified. There are no five races of souls, but only of tongues and bodies; and all souls speak and understand the same language. Therefore your scientific forbears turned to visible things, to skin and teeth and feathers and craniums and Latin words, as their field of knowledge. Naturally, in seeking for outward things, they learned nothing of animal minds, and even forgot the knowledge of their ancestors. Presently appears another race of men, unsatisfied with this superficial classification, trying like the primitive man to understand the animal himself, not his skin or his teeth; and these are the naturalists who, without exception, tell you that animals think. Those who are interested in scientific classifications, or in experiments with monkeys and guinea-pigs, tell you as confidently that they find no thought whatever, but only instinct and reflex

action. Here, then, is a more or less definite line of cleavage, and the origin of the vexed question of animal reasoning.

The latter class of scientists find themselves instantly confronted with difficulties and objections. Here is one Darwin, telling of dogs and monkeys, and showing conclusively that their action, as observed by him, could spring only from some gift of reason. Here are Wallace and Bain and Buechner and Haeckel and a score of others — whom my cousin, the German hare, has told me about — each with a multitude of observations proving the same thing. And here, most interesting of all, are neighbors and friends telling you of their dogs and cats and canary-birds, whose actions are incomprehensible upon any other basis than that of genuine, though rudimentary, thinking.

To meet such troublesome objections the Rabbit notices two methods in general use among the opposing naturalists and psychologists. The first method starts with the principle that animals do not think, instinct being sufficient for all their needs; and then it scrutinizes the work of other naturalists to determine whether their observations be true or false in the light of this elemental principle. The second method is to experiment with caged animals and, by applying certain mechanical stimuli, to show how perfectly they can be governed

by reflex action. Both these methods seem somewhat peculiar to the Rabbit, and so he ventures to examine them, without prejudice, in the light of his philosophy.

My friend, the Rabbit Theologius, tells me that the first method used to be called the deductive or scholastic system by theological rabbits of the Middle Ages, and that scientific rabbits have always been strangely prejudiced in favor of the inductive method; but that is another brier patch. The elemental proposition is that animals do not think, being sufficiently governed by instinct; and the first fact deduced from the proposition is that naturalists who see and record many thoughtful habits of wild animals are all blind dreamers or impostors, because the alleged habits do not correspond to the proposition. So the field is cleared of roots and troublesome objections, and made ready for the seed of a purely mechanical natural history, which Descartes developed some odd centuries ago.

If, in the process, these strenuous scientists sometimes stop to throw a few clods at their neighbors over the fence, who are peaceably clearing their own fields by a different method, that also seems, to a rabbit, to be a rather scholastic kind of demonstration. The clods do no harm, to be sure, but they are altogether inadequate as conveyances of the pure reason, which Kant wrote

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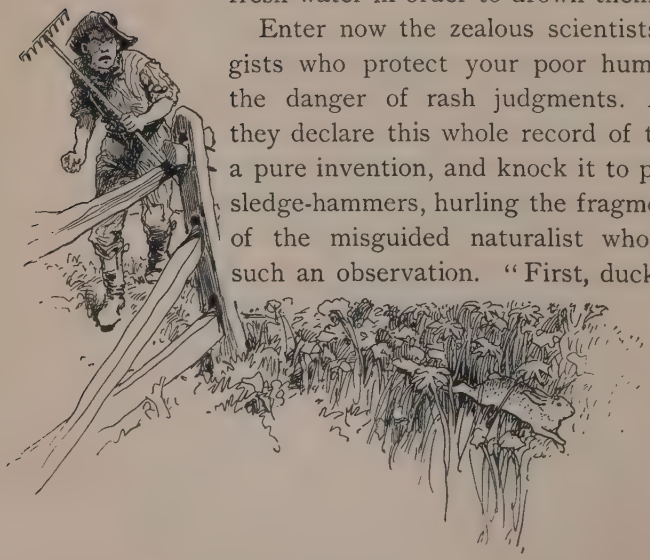
about. Besides, I have often noticed that when Mr. MacGreggor chases me out of his carrots with a rake, he does not seem to be doing much thinking.

To illustrate the matter specifically, the Rabbit recalls the case of some remarkable eider-ducks which have recently aroused discussion among you. Now the eider is a salt-water bird, like the brant, and never ventures into fresh water either to feed or to nest, as coots and mallards and a multitude of other water-fowl are accustomed to do. One of your naturalists, however, saw certain eiders in a fresh-water pond, and after watching them for some time dipping their heads under water, he finally secured one of the birds as a specimen. He found that a salt-water mussel had closed its shells firmly upon the bird's tongue, and without consulting the psychological authorities he rashly announced the conclusion that the eiders had reasonably taken these uncomfortable mussels into fresh water in order to drown them.



Enter now the zealous scientists and psychologists who protect your poor human public from the danger of rash judgments. At first glance they declare this whole record of the eiders to be a pure invention, and knock it to pieces with their sledge-hammers, hurling the fragments at the head of the misguided naturalist who dared publish such an observation. "First, ducks do not think;

therefore any such action on their part is *a priori* out of the question. Second, if by any possibility a duck could think, he would not take the trouble to go to a distant pond, but would sit down comfortably on the nearest bank; for he would surely know, if he knew anything at all, that the tormenting mussel would perish sooner in air than in water. Moreover, since your oysters are placed in fresh water to fatten before you eat them, of course the mussels would thrive there equally well." So ran the convincing argument. Both the fact and the possibility thereof, the naturalist and the credulous public who trusted him, were buried under a heap of ridicule, — which is the curious method often used by scientists to meet any new observation of animal intelligence that happens to trouble their fixed philosophy.

Unfortunately these zealous defenders of the fences of truth overlooked one or two trivial biological details, which the Rabbit must consider for a moment; especially so since they lead us to a curious bit of natural history. Your biologists, who concern themselves with the marvels of the swarming sea life, have discovered a mysterious thing which they call *osmosis*, that is, the inexplicable attraction of two liquids when separated by a porous membrane. To illustrate the matter for yourself, as simply as peeling a turnip, put some fresh water in a tight bladder and suspend

it in air. You observe that not a drop of water escapes, however long you continue the experiment. Now suspend this same bladder in a vessel of salt water, and instantly the fresh water begins to pass through the membrane and mingle with the salt water without; while the salt water, in turn, readily finds its way through the membrane to mingle with the fresh water within. And this process continues until a perfect osmotic balance is established between the two liquids, that is, until the waters within and without the bladder are of the same saltness and density.

This simple illustration suggests the case of every oyster and mussel, whose little life is continually threatened by the great surrounding sea. There are certain vital fluids in a mussel's body, and the greedy sea would have them all if Nature had not thoughtfully given a pinch of salt to her little protégé, — just enough, mind you, to establish a perfect osmotic balance between the precious vital fluids and the hungry ocean. So long as this balance is maintained, the sea with all its power cannot penetrate the delicate membranes to take away the mussel's life. Nevertheless there is a battle going on all the time — a stern, hard battle of life — though your eyes see it not. The mussel opens his shells to feed, and instantly the ocean pours in its flood like a hungry tiger. It is all up now, you think, with that tiny drop of vital fluid

that the greedy sea wants; but not so. Sitting within his delicate membranes, so frail that a child's finger could crush them, the little creature pipes back at his big enemy the thunder of the Almighty:

"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Brave little mussel, backed up by a pinch of salt! But you must not interfere, as men usually do with the good ways of the world; for the moment you take him out of his own place and put him in fresher water the osmotic balance is uneven, the flood creeps in, licking up the vital fluids, and the mussel gives up the fight. He grows sick without a struggle, works his shells feebly, as if gasping for life, and presently he dies. On land he could live without inconvenience from a few hours to a month, as the bladder holds water without leaking, the time varying according to the conditions of atmospheric heat and moisture; and being a tenacious creature — made so, no doubt, by his constant battle against odds — his shells would hold their grip upon any small object for an indefinite time.

There is a case recorded by your Dutch naturalists in which a sheldrake was observed struggling desperately with a large mussel which had gripped the bird's slender bill under water and refused, like all his obstinate race, to let go his hold. The

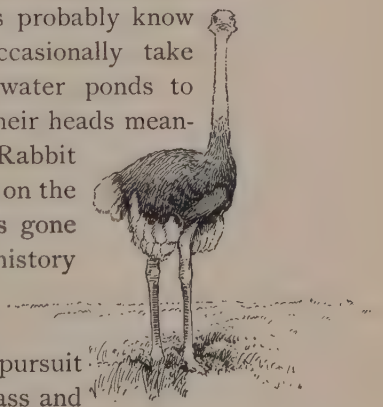
bird swam ashore, being unable to fly with so heavy a burden, and started overland from the sea to a distant fresh-water canal, dragging the mussel along the ground beside him. While in the act of drowning the creature in fresh water the sheldrake was shot, and was photographed several hours later with the mussel still clinging to his bill. And so with this coot that the Rabbit's friend obligingly draws for him from a photograph. He was shot in a fresh-water pond while in the act of drowning this salt-water mussel; and though he was carried around for hours and photographed next day, the mussel still stubbornly refuses, as you see, to let go his grip on the coot's tongue.

These same obstinate mussels, if held in fresh water, become sick in a few minutes, lose all their energy, and slacken their hold upon any object which they may have grasped. And all this is a simple matter of experiment, which any rabbit may prove for himself.

As for "fattening oysters in fresh water," here is another curious bit of natural history which men would do well to remember when they sit down to dine. According to the Rabbit's philosophy, oysters are never placed in fresh water, which is fatal, but rather in the mouths of rivers open to the tides, in shallow bays, or in any other place where the water is less salt than the open ocean. Moreover, these "fattened" oysters, in

which you delight, are invariably sick oysters. When the osmotic balance is disturbed by bringing the oyster from his own bed to fresher water, the salts of the body are dissolved, the savor is lost, and the oyster swells and softens. In a word, he is bloated, not fattened; and so unæsthetically you eat him. He is more digestible perhaps, but also more dangerous; not because he feeds on the fever germs that swarm in your rivers, but because the germs penetrate his body with the fresh water when the osmotic balance is disturbed. The only oyster of which you need have no question, when you sit down to dine, is the small, healthy, well-savored oyster from his own sea bed.

So this curious habit of the eiders, which some of you deny in order to be rid of its thoughtful consequences, has, after all, a strong scientific backing of fact. While the ducks probably know nothing of osmosis, they do occasionally take inconvenient mussels into fresh-water ponds to destroy them. What goes on in their heads meanwhile is another matter, which the Rabbit will consider in another meditation on the subject of animal reason. He has gone into this curious bit of natural history simply to remind you of the ostrich, or of one of your own hens, which when weary of persistent pursuit sticks her head under a tuft of grass and



thinks she is unseen because she herself sees nothing. Likewise it is a henlike and very unscientific way of getting rid of troublesome observations by simply denying them. A rabbit who ignored facts in that way would not live a week, even in the friendliest kind of a brier patch.

There is another way, very suggestive to a rabbit mind, in which a purely deductive reasoning is applied to the question we are considering. In this case the elemental principle is that an animal can do only what his ancestors did; all his instincts are inherited from them, and since he is governed wholly by instinct, his present life is perfectly circumscribed by their past experience. And this you will often hear from scientists, and also find it written in their books.

Such a principle would seem to deny the facts to be observed in your own barn-yard, where you see animals, whose ancestors were but yesterday wild creatures, doing many things utterly foreign to the life of the woods. It would seem also to ignore the obviously changed habits of birds and animals in the neighborhood of your own dwellings. If it be indeed true, this terrible principle, which makes it impossible for the animal to do anything which its ancestors did not do, has unexpected and fatal consequences. The Rabbit hears with astonishment that these same naturalists, who affirm the law that an animal can do only what his

ancestors did, now wear trousers and live in roofed houses and crack nuts with a hammer. How is that possible, since their ancestors grew fur on their own legs and lived in trees and cracked nuts with their teeth?

"But," you say, "man is an exception." Then, according to the ancestral principle, so are his fathers and his grandfathers and, in an endless line, all his ancestors. But queerly enough, to a rabbit, these ancestors turn out to be the very monkeys which your other skeptical scientists shut up in a cage, and by watching their grimaces reëstablish the elemental principle that animals do not think.

Here, then, are the consequences: monkeys do not think; their descendants do not think, since a descendant can do only what his ancestors did. Now these scientists, according to their own established theory of evolution, are among the descendants. The conclusion is inevitable. If their proposition and their logic have any consistent value, then the scientist who thinks that animals do not think belongs himself to a hopelessly unthinking species.

With the monkeys we have a new departure into that curious realm called comparative psychology; and this leads us to the second method of proving that animals do not think by means of experiments upon caged and unnatural creatures. The Rabbit

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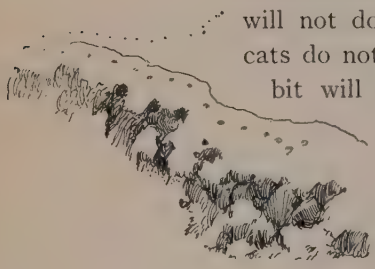
will consider the subject of animal psychology in another meditation, and though the field be as full of unexpected and humorous possibilities as the trail of a cub fox in the snow, we must not be led away from our subject. The only points which it would seem worth while to consider just now are these: (1) A naturalist named Garner, who shut himself up in a cage for months in an African jungle, and fed and watched the wild monkeys and recorded their speech in a phonograph, reaches a radically different conclusion from those professors of psychology who settled the matter comfortably in their own houses. (2) It is hardly a rational process of thinking to watch a caged monkey — a wretched and debased creature of dependence and abnormal habits — and from his actions determine just what the wild bear will or will not do in avoiding a trap. If you say that cats do not think and have no affection, the Rabbit will agree with you — excepting only the reader's pet cat, of which he is not so sure — but that is no reason in the brier patch why we should not examine without prejudice the case of the dog that brings an injured canine companion to the door of the doctor who once healed him, and that dies freely to save his master; neither should we cease to study with an open mind the fox that



fools the dog, and the wolf that outwits the fox. To a simple rabbit, who must think under his own ears and find out the peculiarities of each hostile or friendly animal for himself, it would seem that you men have had altogether too much classification of species — as if all the animals of the same species were precisely alike — and too much generalization about animals of whose inner motives you know practically nothing.

There was a man called Cromwell — an elemental genius whom the Rabbit Historicus told me about — who was far in advance of his age, and who therefore often found himself opposed by the spiritual stubbornness of his Puritan advisers; and one day he broke out with, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to remember it is possible that you may be mistaken." More and more you are forced to sympathize with his rebellion when you are told confidently that animals are only bundles of reflex action, — blind, unreasoning, automatic creatures; and even as you hear the law your dog puts his nose on your knee and you look deep into his eyes, striving to read the secret of that appealing life, so near to your own that it loves and trusts you, and yet forever separated from you by impassable barriers.

The Rabbit knows one old man who, for forty years as hunter and trapper, followed the animals through the northern wilderness, growing more

thoughtful each year as he learned more and more of that untranslated life which goes on under the fur that he had sought so eagerly, until one day he gathered up all his traps and sunk them forever in the lake. And this is one of the things which he has discovered: that a colony of beavers will sometimes steal a young otter cub and bring him up as a slave, making him dig tunnels, clean the lodge (for beavers are neat as New England housekeepers), and do all sorts of household drudgery, while the beavers are busy building dams and houses, cutting their supply of winter food-wood, and doing other things that only they know how to do, and that they must do in a hurry before the river freezes.

If one of your naturalists had written that as his own observation, or even as having his approval, he would have been promptly labeled a romancer by your scientists, and would have been ridiculed by every thoughtless reviewer who deigned to notice his observation. Yet remember Cromwell's exhortation to the Puritans. There are more things in the animal world than are dreamed of in your natural histories. Mother animals of all species, if deprived of their own young, will seek out any helpless cub that may satisfy the maternal instinct and relieve the swelling dugs of their burden of food. Even your cats, which are less than the least of Nature's mercies, have been known to play the

mother to young rats, their natural food, and to puppies, their natural enemy; and mother wolves have been known to steal even your own children, and to feed them carefully in their dens. When such a stranger cub is brought up among gregarious animals in this way he often follows the pack for years, though he never shares in their primitive government. Among the beavers, with their perpetual housework, such a cub might easily pass for a kind of household drudge, digging and cleaning and carrying sticks in his teeth, since he knows nothing whatever of the beavers' more intelligent occupations.

The trapper was quite right in his observation that an otter cub is sometimes found in the lodge of his enemies; it is only when you try to read the beaver's motive that you must go softly. But you men once kept slaves; you still unthinkingly make drudges of people less fortunate than yourselves; and that, among a Christian people, is a more remarkable fact in natural history than the old trapper's alleged discovery. More than this, the little ants that run about under your feet have always kept servants; they even make war on other tribes, as you once did and as the Arabs still do, in order to take captives and make them household slaves. If then ants and men, on opposite ends of the animal creation, both keep slaves, what is there absurd or impossible in the idea that

some animal between the extremes may occasionally manifest the same curious instinct or inclination? You forget that most of the facts now regarded as the commonplaces of science were but yesterday called impossibilities by your fathers, and that truth is still very far from being entirely discovered.

According to the Rabbit's philosophy, your minds differ from ours chiefly in the matter of specialization. Starting originally with rudimentary minds, capable of enormous expansion in many directions, you have developed for a million years along thoughtful and rational lines, until you are now almost out of the animals' sight. And this you did, not by any will or purpose of your own, but doubtless because that infinite Thoughtfulness which put you here intended from the beginning to make you what you are. The animals, meanwhile, specialized along different lines; one improved his sight, another his cunning, and another the nerves of his nose, until they grew more responsive than a wind-harp to every message from the outer world. But the moment a man goes back to elemental principles, to primordial dangers and experiences, then all the years of his specialization seem to vanish away like smoke, and he acts exactly like his remote animal ancestors.

Some of your psychologists, noting this, yet not quite understanding the long history that stretches

behind the experience, have claimed that a man in swimming, for instance, does no thinking, but is lost in a maze of sense-impressions, too hazy to stimulate any rational process in his brain. They forget that every extension has at least two directions; that it is impossible to specialize any one faculty without some slight corresponding development in the other; and so they conclude that, like the man in swimming, the animals are always too much involved in a maze of pure sense-impressions to be capable of any thinking.

While such a conclusion undoubtedly contains a grain of truth, it is still only half true, even of the man. It applies, perhaps, to his hazy impressions of the clouds and the waves and the skimming swallows; but it does inadequate justice to his mental processes concerning the small boy who capers gleefully along the bank, with the intention of tying the man's shirt-sleeves into hard knots while the owner is in swimming. The Rabbit was swimming a river, one day, and was carried away by the powerful current. As he swept down to the falls a rock and a bending branch both offered help. Like a flash he let himself pass the rock to seize upon the branch, though it was farther down-stream and nearer, horribly near, to death. Undoubtedly, though he was unaware of it at the time, there was a lightning process of thought by which he concluded that the rock offered too

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slippery a grip to risk it. Afterward he could recall nothing whatever of the process of thought, but only of the swift action. So in all emergencies. There are instantaneous processes of thinking and reaching a conclusion, even when a man afterward thinks that he has acted involuntarily. That single swift moment before you lose consciousness, in drowning for instance, in which a thousand thoughts and memories and impressions come and go like a ray of light, should make us all humble in setting limits to the powers of these curious things that we call our minds. The fact is that the processes of thought are sometimes too rapid to follow and analyze — I know it seems a paradox to say that the mind of a rabbit or a man cannot follow its own thinking; but you men have to deal sometimes with a subconscious self, which so far has proved more elusive of your analysis than any spirit — and no man can surely say how far certain actions are the result of instantaneous processes of thinking, or of purely involuntary impulses.

In the presence of this subconscious self, as the wise psychologists call it, which knows things without knowing how it knows them, it seems to the Rabbit that you have become more like us; for the animals also have curious warnings and premonitions that are utterly beyond the range of even our keen senses. Strangely enough, that same subconscious self apparently allies you also

to a purely spiritual world and to your God, who probably knows all things intuitively, without going through your laborious processes from cause to effect. For cause and effect, according to your greatest philosopher Kant, are not ultimate realities, but only *Schein*, as the German hare says, that is, apparent conditions, like time and space, under which you live for a season before living in a larger and better way elsewhere. Your present knowledge may be like the sunshine, which comes unnoticed and unseen through millions of miles of darkened space, self-sufficient and outwardly unmanifest, until it breaks on the world's atmosphere and ripples in what you call the light. Without material opposition it can never manifest itself; but what light is in itself you do not know, for "it doth not yet appear." So, what you call knowledge may only be manifest here by the opposition of material and transient things. True knowledge, knowledge of a permanent or eternal kind, may be altogether different; like the knowledge of your God, for instance, or like the intuition of certain animals.

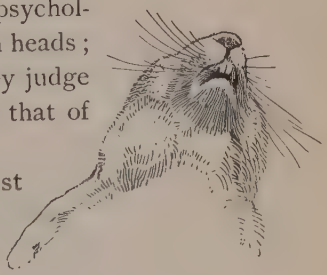
An open and unprejudiced study of the animal mind, therefore, may bring you face to face with the astounding idea that in this amazing world of apparent contradictions we all move to the same harmony, and that in us all is something of the direct knowledge and inspiration of the Almighty.

But that is something which your sacred books told you so long ago that you now consider it strange philosophy.

In the matter of the psychologist's contention that no animal can think without language, you have again forgotten some things that the Rabbit must take account of in his philosophy. A man may adapt means to an end without consciously naming the means which he uses. Deaf-mutes, even when blind, have shown you that they are capable of good thinking. They have a substitute for language, to be sure; but who has told you that the animals also have not a substitute? Very much of your own thought is inexpressible; it has no words; it lies on the border between thinking and pure sense-impression, between knowledge of cause and effect, as you know it, and intuition which you may not analyze. Children and the higher animals live almost continually on this same border-land; and how far certain intelligent animals cross over from sense-impression to elementary thinking is still among you an unmeasured quantity. Your present difficulty seems to be that you have drawn a sharp line, on one side of which is thought and on the other instinct. Such a division is, of course, impossible, if only for the reason that, mingled with your own thought, there are still many instincts. It is not a line but a border-land that stretches between you and the animals; and it

is inevitable, among creatures having brains organized in the same general way, that such a border should be crossed freely from both directions.

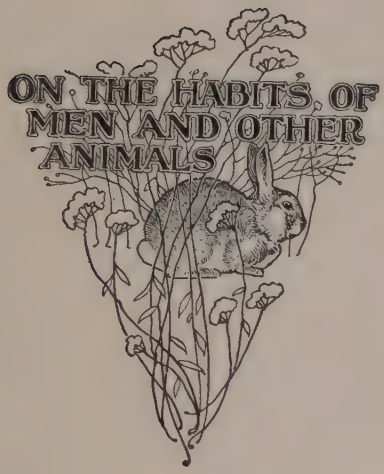
To the Rabbit, whose philosophy must include both the carrots and Mr. MacGreggor, it appears that your interesting problem, if it is ever settled by you, will be settled neither in the study nor in the monkey's cage. The one has too much deductive and dogmatic ease; the other too much of the *Bandar Log*, that is, the philosophy of the Monkey People. I have seen some scientists go through my brier patch, and know how curiously blind they can be to everything except the unimportant matter of the identification of species. I have seen also considerable experimentation upon animals, and the end of it all was this: *Brother, thy tail hangs down behind*, which is the song the Monkey People sing at the close of every experiment. The Indians have already settled your question in the animal's favor; and those who live close to animals and who know most about them are curiously unanimous in the Indians' opinion. Though they know no psychology, they do know what goes on in their own heads; and from the animal's actions at times they judge of a motive and a thought somewhat like that of their own childhood.



If they write such things, some alarmist sets up the cry that they are giving human traits to the beast. That were surely not

so strange, even if true, since men and animals have so many traits in common. The Rabbit notes with interest that all your religious writers do the same thing concerning gods and angels, of whom you know even less than you know of animals. But what is thoughtlessly called a transference of human traits seems rather the reasonable effort to explain a more or less hidden life in human terms, which, whether you are speaking of gods or conies, are the only expressions you can possibly understand. If a god or a rabbit should speak in terms of his own experience, you would probably find him more incomprehensible than any Hottentot.

It is possible, therefore, that your simple man, who lives close to nature and speaks in enduring human terms, is nearer to the truth of animal life than is your psychologist, who lives in a library and to-day speaks a language that is to-morrow forgotten. There is a twilight of thought, as well as of day, a shadowy realm stretching wide and vague between the blind sensation and the pure reason. The man gets up and goes into a house where a light is shining,—a light kindled and kept by his unknown ancestors. The animal stays out in the twilight. That is perhaps the chief difference.


ON THE HABITS OF
MEN AND OTHER
ANIMALS

On the Habits of Men and Other Animals

THERE is a naturalist, a thoughtful man, who tries to forget that there are races and species, and to understand each animal and man just as he is in his own skin. In a whimsical humor, the other day, he was explaining to his friends why your wife wears a certain style of bonnet with pleasure for a little season, but feels most uncomfortable and ill at ease the moment her neighbors begin to wear something different. As an object-lesson he caught a common sparrow, put a daub of red paint on her head, and then turned her loose among her neighbors. The moment they saw the unusual head-dress all the other sparrows, male and female, began to make the poor creature's life miserable. They jabbered excitedly at first, calling in every idle sparrow on the street; then they set upon the sparrow of the bonnet and chivied her out of the flock and made her an outcast. Day after day she tried to return and be sociable, but the flock drove her away

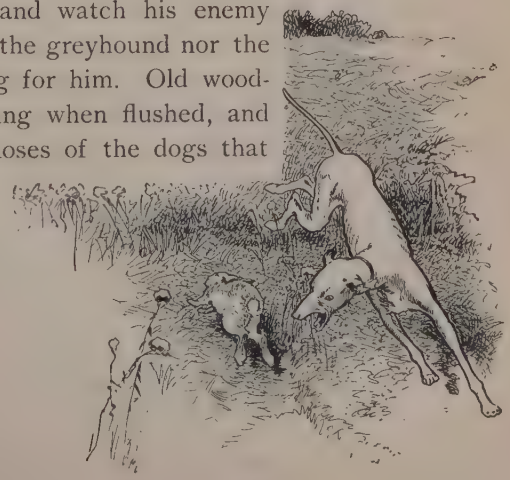
without mercy. When she persisted in her attempt, not seeing her own disfigurement nor understanding the situation, they fell upon her savagely one day and killed her.

"And that is the reason," said the thoughtful man whimsically, "why our women follow the style in bonnets."

There is another naturalist — in such contrast to the first that the Rabbit, unlike your scientists, never dreams of judging all men alike — who announces positively what seems to be a prevailing opinion among you. "Man," he says, "is a creature of intelligence and reason; the animal is a creature of blind habit and instinct." And he proves his philosophy by pointing his finger at the first rabbit he sees in the brier patch. "Take that rabbit yonder, for instance," he says convincingly, "the moment you start him out of his brier patch he begins to run in a blind circle. He is used to a small territory, and so he runs over the same ground again and again, instead of lighting out into new territory and escaping his enemies. It's a habit, and he can't change it even to save his life."

Now it is barely possible that a rabbit holds to a small territory not from habit but simply because he knows all its brush piles and hollow logs and dens in the rocks so well that he is safer there than on strange territory. He runs in a circle only when he is in cover thick enough to

conceal his movements, and this good habit often saves him from a charging enemy. For the lynx or the man, losing sight of his game for an instant, generally rushes straight forward in the direction in which the rabbit disappeared, leaving the little fellow hiding somewhere behind him in the thicket. The larger hares of the North, whose speed is greater than ours, will sometimes run for miles without turning, depending on their legs instead of their wits; and no rabbit will run in a circle in an open field, where his movements can be seen by an enemy. If followed by a swift greyhound in such a field, the rabbit holds his straightaway course until the hound overtakes and jumps to seize him, when the rabbit, who because of his peculiar eyes can always see back over his shoulders, doubles suddenly and lets the hound shoot over him. Then the rabbit cuts away on another straight course and keeps up his doubling and dodging until he reaches cover, where he begins to circle the moment the underbrush conceals his flight. For the greyhound runs by sight only, and after the rabbit has half completed his circle he can sit down comfortably and watch his enemy from behind, where neither the greyhound nor the man ever dreams of looking for him. Old woodcock often do the same thing when flushed, and so deceive even the keen noses of the dogs that are used in hunting them.



In contrast with this excellent habit, when a man is suddenly startled and followed by an enemy, he generally loses all his wits and runs straight away, even though the legs behind him are far swifter than his own. The Rabbit has noticed that most persons, when chased by a bull — a vicious brute that roams the neighboring berry field, making the Rabbit wonder what all your laws are for — will run away headlong, instead of doubling or quietly avoiding the rushes of the clumsy brute, which is easily fooled even by a boy who shows half the wit of a rabbit.

Again, the Rabbit has noticed that, with a few rare exceptions, all you men use your right hands well, but are clumsy as young pups when called upon to do anything with the left hand, which, since you are two-sided creatures, ought to be just as skillful as the other. What originated this senseless habit that now governs you is unknown to the Rabbit. A trivial-minded scientist suggests that perhaps one of your ancestors, a protoplasm in a primeval brook, found himself in an eddy behind a rock, and had to use one side more than the other to keep his balance against the current; and you have followed the habit ever since, as you follow most of your habits, with great reverence for ancient custom, but with small regard for modern reason. The point is that you are now all bound by a habit which, like your high collars,

no animal would tolerate, and which in a world of work and accidents seems woefully out of place. An animal who foolishly depended on one paw, as you do, would thereby lose half his scant chances for life and miss another half of his good dinners.

Many of your habits are doubtless, like our own, the result of a hidden sense within you, much quicker than your slow wits and beyond the control of your own wills; as when you jump at a sudden alarm, or dodge when you hear the whine of a bullet or of a swift-flying bee over your heads, acting first and thinking about it afterwards. Your psychologists call this reflex action, and babble of grooves in your brains and nervous systems in which the molecules run up and down easily, like peas in a dry pod. The Rabbit, having a slightly different conception of the great Intelligence that works ceaselessly in a clover-leaf or a man's brain, looks somewhat askance at this psychology; but just now he has no quarrel with it. The animals also have their reflex habits, and their prevalence in man and other animals points to a common origin, or at least to a time when your ancestors and mine lived close together in the same brier patch. The Rabbit came to a river, one day, in which some boys were swimming; and the same man who experimented on the sparrow was giving the boys some directions. "Keep your fingers close together, and so get

more power against the water in your strokes," he said. The boys listened and nodded their approval of the good doctrine; but the moment they got beyond their depth and struggled with the current all their fingers and thumbs were stretched as wide apart as possible.

"That also is an animal habit," said the man thoughtfully. "Once there were webs between their fingers, and upon a time long ago their five fingers were but five rays in the fin of a primeval fish. They stretch them now, senselessly and unconsciously, because their ancestors stretched them consciously and with good reason."

The Rabbit could appreciate that philosophy, because in his thoughtless moments he finds himself doing many senseless things for which he must blame his forefathers, as you men used to put the theological blame for your sins upon one old Adam. Animals and men alike struggle against habits which are but memories of a remote ancestry. All our children's teeth are set on edge because their greedy fathers have at some time eaten sour grapes; but while the animals can forget their fathers enough to change their habits as soon as they are outgrown or dangerous, you men cling to yours for a thousand years after they have become only clogs and hindrances to your good living.

Take, for instance, the universal habit among you which is called fashion. Why should your

women, fat and lean alike, all wear tight sleeves to-day and appear to-morrow with huge and abortive things in the same place, which make them look like caricatures of a beauty-loving God's handiwork? Why should your men — especially your young men of the colleges, who have fewer fashions than women, but are more enslaved to those they acknowledge — all alike, fat and lean, tall and short, shave their faces and have their hair cut in the same pneumonia-inducing way, and wear the same bizarre hats and ugly shoes and neckties in the very latest fashion? None of these, remember, represent their own scant ideas of style; for all these fashions are originated by tradesmen with the sole object of changing the styles as often as possible, and so of making money out of a college boy's infatuation.

The Rabbit was puzzled at this senseless custom until he remembered those remote ancestors of yours, who had an excellent reason for what they did. The naturalist of the sparrow's bonnet was essentially right in his philosophy. Your fashions and your slavery to fashion are the direct result of the customs of the animals when they lived together in the herd or pack. Uniformity is there the absolute rule and is necessary for the animal's protection. Your hunters have often noticed that gregarious animals and birds will instantly drive away from them any member that

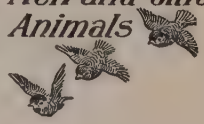
has some unusual or striking peculiarity in his physical appearance. Nature has given to each animal the outward dress that harmonizes best with his surroundings and his mode of life. No one knows this better than the animal himself, who from the time he is born until he dies depends on this harmony of appearance to protect him from his enemies and to conceal him while he is hunting his own dinner. The moment an animal appears in the herd with some peculiarity that calls attention to himself, he becomes an object of suspicion. He is out of harmony with Nature, and therefore wrong; for to be harmonious is the one great ideal of the animal, and possibly even men might learn something from his standard. Any peculiarity not only draws instant attention to the individual, but — a far more dangerous matter — it draws the eyes of prowling enemies to the harmonious herd of which he is a part. So they drive him away to live where his oddity will bring harm upon no one but himself. And this, if you but think of it a moment seriously, is the reasonable origin of all the unreasonable whims and vagaries of fashion which prevail in human society.

For your modern fashion is but the old safety-law of the herd or flock, stripped of all its virtue and reasonableness. In outward appearance and dress you follow it blindly, though you have now

no excuse nor reason for it whatever; and you would look infinitely more attractive if you but used a little originality and, when you find a becoming style, would stick to it reasonably, instead of following the lead of your richer and fatter neighbor across the way, whose cruel husband supports her in such idleness, poor woman, that she has now only style and bridge whist to engage her feeble attention. Meanwhile in moral and religious matters, where you need segregation more than you need new laws and commandments, and where the old reasonable herd-law would be your moral salvation, you pay no heed to it whatever, but allow all sorts of moral and religious lunatics to live in the same street and mingle freely with your innocent children. The Rabbit finds nothing in his philosophy to explain why you should devoutly follow the old animal habit in dress, where it is out of place, and ignore it in morals, where you sadly need it.

There is one interesting exception to this exclusive rule of the herd or pack, of which doubtless many of you are thinking. That is the case of a pure white bird or animal, an albino, which appears occasionally among the darker, harmoniously colored animals and which upsets all their usual habits. The Rabbit, whose relatives turn white every winter as a matter of course, is at a loss to understand the full meaning of this phenomenon.

Such an animal seems invariably to feel his peculiarity, like one of your own freaks or geniuses, and instinctively lives much by himself. When he approaches the herd they seem to feel a vague wonder; they never treat the white animal with familiarity, as they treat each other, or with resentment, as they treat a conspicuous and therefore dangerous member of the herd. They never harass or drive him away; but on the other hand he rarely finds a mate among them. Even the savage animals that prey upon the herd seem to feel fear or wonder when he approaches, and the Rabbit has never known the case of an albino being killed or even attacked by hunting birds or animals. It may possibly be, therefore, that an albino, with his queer ways and his pink eyes, so utterly different from other animals to whom they are accustomed, awakens an elemental sense of mystery among the four-footed tribes, just as he does among Indians and uncivilized races wherever he appears. He is not, therefore, a danger, but rather — so it may seem to them — a kind of protection to the herd from savage beasts, which turn aside when they meet him. And it may possibly be that your Indians' belief, that a white deer must be spared because he brings good luck, was derived from the animals, who treat every albino with respect, contrary to their usual custom of driving all unusual or conspicuous members out of the common herd or flock.

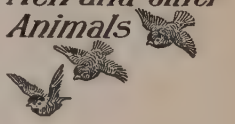


The Rabbit, who is naturally of an observant turn of mind, noticed that your naturalist, who declared that animals were creatures of habit, wore a most uncomfortable stiff collar about his neck, as if he were ready, like a dog, to be tied up to the next kennel. It was a hot summer day, and the Rabbit learned with astonishment that the ugly collar had been made more uncomfortable still by being first soaked in white mud and then hardened by a hot iron, so that it was unclean as well as uncomfortable. The man wore also a stiff hat, which shut out all the air and cut off the supply of blood from his hair; and he had followed the senseless custom so long, I am told, that the top of his head had no more hair or character than a peeled turnip. He had crushed his elastic feet into unyielding shoes, made from the hard skin of some dead and diseased beast, which made the Rabbit's toes ache just to think of carrying the cumbersome things around all day long. All the rest of his uncouth dress was, like his hat and his shoes, perfectly calculated to shut him out from every natural pleasure, from the tingle of air on his bare skin, the refreshing touch of the grass and the moist earth and the running water on his feet, making him cool and sweet and comfortable. He wrapped and swathed and bundled himself into a score of hard discomforts for a summer day, and all because it was the way of

his breed to do so, and he never had a thought in his own head of changing the imbecile custom.

As with your clothes, so in other matters; of eating by the clock when you are not hungry, and drinking all sorts of abominable drinks when you are not thirsty, spoiling a natural pleasure by undue haste and untimeliness; of going to bed when you are not drowsy, and getting up yawning when you long to sleep; of smoking at all hours, of fearing good solitude and following contaminating crowds, shutting yourself up in dens that never see the stars, and breathing vile air that others have breathed before you, — in all these, and a hundred other matters of your daily life, you seem to a rabbit to be bound, fettered, and gagged by a multitude of physical and social habits that no free animal would endure for an instant. From the moment you rise hurriedly and dress till you lie down to broken and disturbed sleep you are rarely free men, but are slaves of habits, nine tenths of which are without sense or reason. The few habits of an animal are reasonable and essential and pleasant in their occupation; the multitude of yours are distasteful, unnecessary, and injurious. Yet your naturalists call us creatures of habit, and you accept the classification without a thought of your own as to how little self-knowledge or observation there is in it.

It will be said at once that all this is only superficially true; that man makes his own habits and



is free to change, while the animal's habits are inborn and he has no power either to make or to modify them; and this is another of the comfortable generalizations that pass for natural history in your very interesting books. Ask your great biologists how much free will there is among you. Some of your habits, as the Rabbit has shown, are born in you; the rest are made for you by ancient custom or by modern society, and you have rarely the courage or the power to change them and to be yourselves. To change a habit of thinking among men requires centuries, and generally the blood of a few martyrs; while the animal changes his simple habits in a single generation, led by his own reasonable experience.

For instance, ruffed grouse in the wilderness where no man dwells are tame and unsuspicious creatures, barely moving aside out of your way; while the same birds in your own woods are wary and unapproachable. A few years has made a complete change in the habits of the bird, and in whatever counsels the mothers give to their little ones as they lead them about the woods. Now how long does it take men to change their habits of thought? There was a great branch of the church that once held a barbarous idea of your God, namely, that he was a monster who damned innocent children and all the unelect. Every mother among you, and every good man who listened to

his own soul, knew that the doctrine was false; yet it took that particular church over three centuries to change its very peculiar habits of thinking. So with your government, which long ago as a little handful of colonies adopted laws and a constitution. Some parts of the latter have been for a century a very millstone about your necks; but you cannot trust yourselves to change the habit. The Rabbit has heard of governments across the sea that for ages have ground down and oppressed their own people, keeping a multitude of men in ignorance and poverty and unending toil, in order that a few vain and vicious creatures might rest idly in their alleged nobility of uselessness; and even now, after all your boasted progress and enlightenment, they cannot or dare not change their ways of thinking. How long would the wolf-pack stand such unspeakable nonsense in its leaders? Yet these slow churches and governments, I am told, are two of the greatest institutions that exist among you.

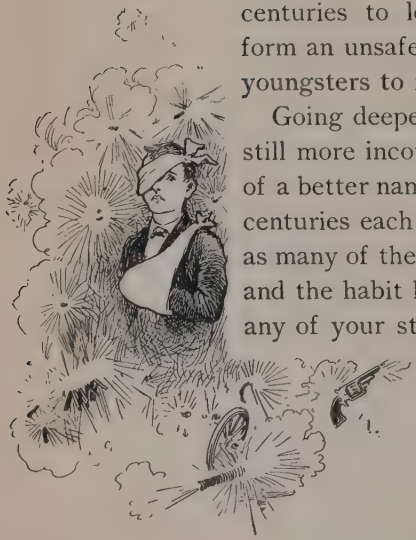
Again, in the wilderness your common robins live on buds during the summer, and run along the shore, like sandpipers, after snails and water food; here after a few seasons they live on fruits and worms, though their former food is quite as abundant as it was in the wilderness. Now how many centuries will it take you to change your injurious habit of eating too much flesh and adopt a reasonable diet? Your birds, like the pigeons and

swallows, change the style of their architecture to meet new conditions. How many years will it take you men to change the ugly and unwholesome nests in which multitudes of your tenant-dwellers live, a perpetual menace to your society? The birds sing and cry aloud from the free air, but instantly soften their voices when they are on the ground and conspicuous; but how many more centuries will it take your pretty girls to soften their shrill and self-conscious voices in conspicuous places? or your Yankees to turn from their intolerable talking through their noses — *yank! yank!* like a nut-hatch — instead of through their lips that Nature fashioned for harmony?

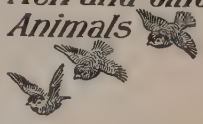
You have still another curious habit, which you will never understand till you look at it out of eyes that are not yet quite blinded by custom. Suppose your God should visit you each year with a frightful calamity, with two sleepless nights of fire and accident and death and general anxiety? Suppose he should kill and maim and burn two thousand of you in a single day, putting out your eyes, tearing off your arms, and visiting you afterwards with unnumbered cases of lockjaw, with all their suffering and horror; and all this for no better reason than to manifest the power or vanity of his dread sovereign will? Even your few remaining Calvinists could not stand such an affliction; your churches would be emptied, and you would reasonably

conclude that a devil, and not a good God, had some large part in running the universe. Yet you visit these horrors upon yourselves each year by a senseless and outrageous Fourth-of-July celebration of your independence; and there is hardly a man among you who ventures to teach even his own boy that it is an unreasonable and atrocious habit.

Now when an intelligent animal, whatever the habits of its ancestors, is injured or sees his companions caught in any kind of a trap, he not only avoids the danger himself, but tries also, according to the measure of his intelligence, to keep his little ones and his own tribe away from the danger forever afterwards. A flock of common sparrows that taste poison or fall into a trap in one of your gardens need no repeated experience to change their habits and places of foraging. Indeed, with the exception of yourselves, the Rabbit does not know a single bird or animal that would require two centuries to learn that matches and gunpowder form an unsafe habit of jollification for thoughtless youngsters to follow.



Going deeper into your lives the Rabbit finds a still more incomprehensible habit, which, for want of a better name, he calls your acquisitiveness. For centuries each man has sought to grasp for himself as many of the world's common mercies as possible, and the habit has become so overmastering that in any of your streets the Rabbit is now confronted



with a most astounding spectacle. Here is one who has seized for himself so much of the world's land and goods that his descendants for generations cannot possibly use them all; while a few doors away is one who starves, or who must work from morning till night, not in the joy of good labor, but with the awful fear of hunger or want for his own children. The Rabbit will consider this spectacle in another meditation, on the subject of religion. Just now he simply points out to you that the wolf-pack, whom you name as the symbol of rapacity, knows no such atrocious habit. What a wolf kills belongs to himself only when it is too small a mouthful to share. When he acquires larger game it belongs to his pack before he has taken a mouthful of it. Did he so far forget himself as to claim more than he needs, his intelligent neighbors would speedily teach him a better philosophy. The little ants that you crush under your feet have the fixed habit of working each one for the good of the community of which he is a part; you men have the habit of working desperately for your own individual interests. Now, frankly, which is the better habit?

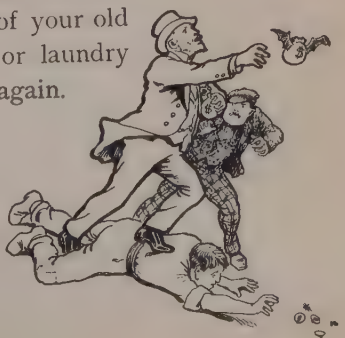
Did the Rabbit hear you make the old, habitual objection that, if you were less strenuously acquisitive, you might lose your individuality? That would be quite true if individuality means selfishness; but in rabbit talk the two words have a

somewhat different meaning. A rabbit who thought that in order to develop his individuality he must violently compete with his fellows in the same brier patch and seize more than he needed while others went hungry, would be considered by other rabbits to be a victim of his peculiar vices rather than of his individual virtues. Besides, you have forgotten your own history. The Rabbit Historicus tells me that your most wonderful city attained her intellectual and artistic greatness at a time when all her citizens worked for the community; that a little city called Athens produced, from the idea of all working together for the common good, more mighty individuals in art and science and philosophy in a few generations than all the rest of the world combined has ever produced in as many centuries.

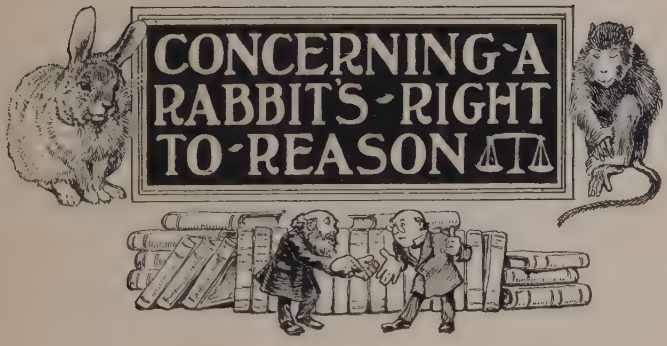
The Rabbit has no theories of government to recommend, being engaged in the pleasant occupation of governing himself harmoniously. He simply suggests that, viewed dispassionately from the brier patch, your habit of acquisitiveness, far from developing your individuality, is drawing you in constantly increasing numbers into an ignoble chase for material wealth, in which you have no more individual character than a crowd in the subway. For in your anxiety to get your share, and a little more, of the world's common mercies you incidentally lose that mental poise, that peace, that quiet faith in yourself and in your fellow-man,

which are essential to develop the best powers of the artist and the artisan. So your murderous competition, which in some insane moment you adopted for your business motto, far from breeding noble men, seems to be changing you rapidly into a race of nervous wrecks, grasping billionaires, and half-desperate or wholly discontented working-men, none of whom have any joy in their labor. And since such competition is wholly unnecessary among rational beings, in a world that can easily be made to produce enough for all, the Rabbit is wondering how long it will take you to see your obvious danger and to change your habit.

Thinking of all these things, of a race of men who bind a thousand superfluous weights of habit about their necks as they enter the good race of life, the Rabbit is moved out of his usual impersonal attitude to offer a friendly word of advice to superior beings; and in this he is probably only reflecting the attitude of a great psychologist who once left his big book in the brier patch. Since you are bound to be slaves of habits of some kind you might at least exercise the prerogative of free men in choosing only good ones to follow. Begin early, for by the time you have passed the first third of your life you have more fixed habits than there are fixed wrinkles in the sleeves of your old coat, and not all the hot irons of life or laundry can ever straighten them wholly out again.



Possibly you still think the Rabbit's philosophy of your habits to be somewhat extreme, and perhaps it is; but if you think about it a moment it may suggest a truth which you have carelessly overlooked. It may serve also to emphasize this peculiar difference between men and other animals: the wild animal takes the slightest hint and modifies his ways immediately, according to the measure of his small intelligence; while the man requires a century and a revolution to change his fixed habits, and even then he follows his leaders unwillingly. So the Rabbit, who tries to understand things as they are, finds himself wondering in his brier patch why you should call us creatures of habit and yourselves reasonable beings. Perhaps this also is a habit.


CONCERNING A
RABBIT'S RIGHT
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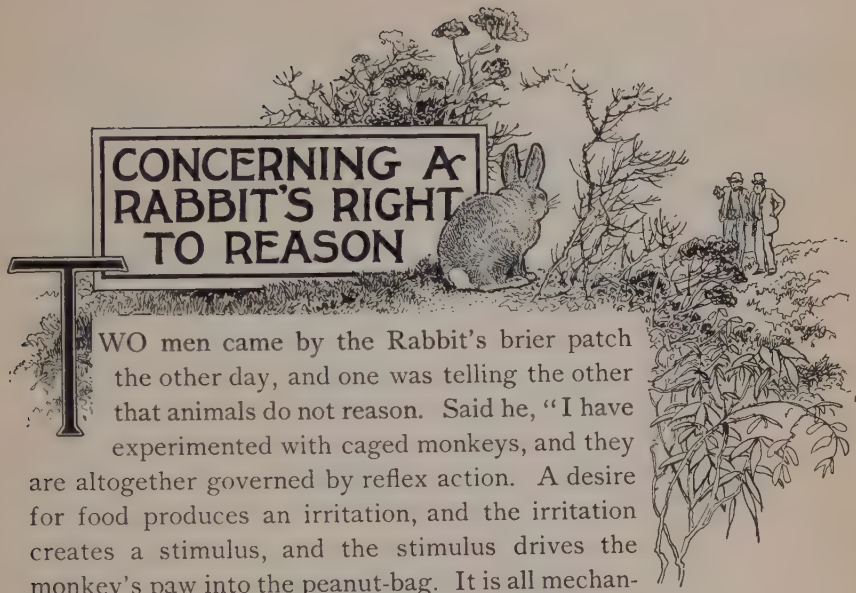
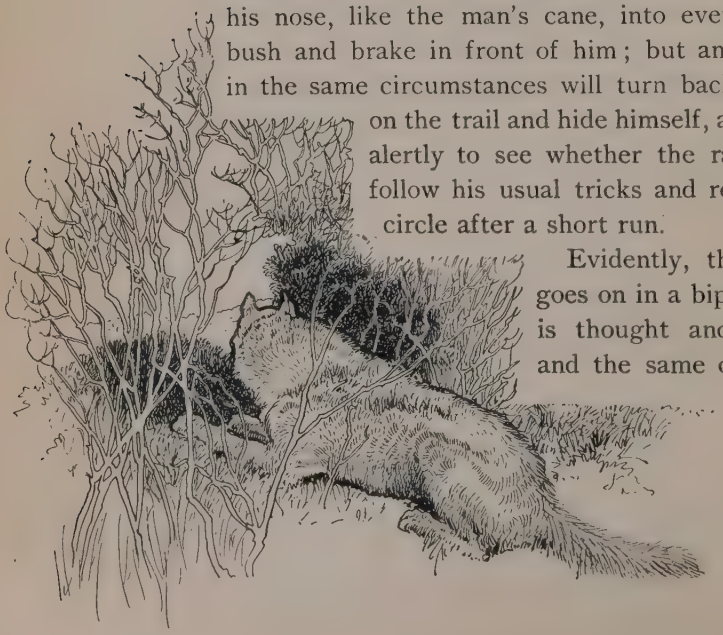


TWO men came by the Rabbit's brier patch the other day, and one was telling the other that animals do not reason. Said he, "I have experimented with caged monkeys, and they are altogether governed by reflex action. A desire for food produces an irritation, and the irritation creates a stimulus, and the stimulus drives the monkey's paw into the peanut-bag. It is all mechanical; there is no thought whatever about it — not a bit," he added emphatically, as he picked a huckleberry and put it thoughtlessly into his mouth and then spat it out again, with a grimace like a monkey with a red pepper, when he found the taste of a malodorous bug on the berry.

"To be sure, all nonsense," said the other man. "These field naturalists, who say that animals do reasonable things, are all blind dreamers and impostors. See that rabbit there, waiting like a fool for us to go by, and depending on his coloring to

hide him. How could he possibly think? What has he in his head to think with?" Then he came to the edge of the brier patch, thinking to catch me, while I bolted out of sight into the thickest cover and then circled behind him, as rabbits love to do, and sat low in a clump of dried grass, watching him go poking his cane into every empty bush and brake in front of his nose, where of course no sensible rabbit would ever think of hiding.

Now an animal, unlike your psychologist, never puts a berry into his mouth without first examining it to see whether or not it be good; and in contrast with the second man's action, when an idle wolf who is not hungry passes a brier patch, he minds his own affairs and lets the rabbits alone. If the wolf be hungry and inexperienced, and a rabbit bolts away into thick cover where he cannot be seen, a foolish young wolf will go poking his nose, like the man's cane, into every empty bush and brake in front of him; but an old wolf in the same circumstances will turn back silently on the trail and hide himself, and watch alertly to see whether the rabbit will follow his usual tricks and return in a circle after a short run.



Evidently, then, what goes on in a biped's head is thought and reason; and the same or a more

intelligent thing in a head that possesses four legs instead of two, is stimulus and reflex action. Verily this is strange philosophy. Your naturalist speaks of reason as if you possessed it all, and of animal instinct as if it were not found abundantly in your own heads and hearts. Perhaps our real difficulty, our lack of harmony with the music of the universe, is due to the fact that — like so many men who argue about names and terms and shibboleths whose meaning they imperfectly understand, or else perfectly misunderstand — we have somewhat hazy ideas of what we are talking about so confidently. So, before the Rabbit tells you about his own instincts, let us determine just what thought is, if possible, and what is the exact nature of that reasoning which you claim for your exclusive possession.

When you go into your own head and examine it, as you would any other strange place, you find a curious dream-river there — a river of fancies, feelings, thoughts, memories, ideas — flowing silently, ceaselessly through you; with a thousand impressions of the world, of sound and color and melody, running like ripples over the surface; and a dim consciousness of yourself, as of a spirit brooding over the stream, now flowing on with it, and now rising above it to watch its flow. Such a curious river flows endlessly through you at every instant, and to pick a thought out of it is like trying to

recall a drop of rain that you saw, a moment ago, fall into the meadow brook. It may be, at the moment you look into your dream-river, that a bird is singing, or a child is smiling up into your face; but to find just where the sense-impressions and the vague fancies suggested by the bird's melody or the child's smile pass over into conscious reasoning is like saying to the river, "Stop a moment, till I see what you are hiding there under your surface."

Indeed the Rabbit, like Hume and certain other of your philosophers, is often puzzled to find even himself in the midst of this dream-river, which flows ceaselessly through him, and which carries his ego away even while he is looking for it. To find your elusive self is the most difficult problem of human thought.

For this reason the Rabbit—like all other animals, and like poets and prophets—thinks but seldom, rather giving himself up to the pleasant occupation, for which he was doubtless intended, of keeping the feeling within him in perfect accord with the world without. Therefore his instincts are keener than yours; he can find his way where you would be lost with too much thinking; he can feel the call of his mate at a distance, and know intuitively many things beyond human sense or reason.

Your great Berkeley, who was the father of Kant's idealism, would explain this harmony and intuition by saying that we are each one essentially

a spirit; that beside us there is only one other reality in the universe, and this other reality is the Great Spirit that dreams forever in the world. So, by simply keeping ourselves receptive and responsive, we are always in direct touch and harmony with the source of all truth and knowledge. We think truly only when we think the thoughts of the World Spirit after him, or rather receive his thoughts; for the mind seems to be more a receiving than a creating instrument. It may be that Berkeley is quite right in his philosophy; certainly many suggestive things point all that way. But we were trying, you remember, to find out what reason is.

In the midst of this ceaseless flow of undefined feelings and sensations, which the Rabbit has called your dream-river, your attention is suddenly arrested by a cry of distress, and leaving the pleasant contemplation of yourself, you see that the little child who was lately smiling up into your face is now looking at you tearfully and calling you from a hole in the lattice under your piazza. She crawled in there, evidently, after a late violet that strayed away from your flower bed; and she is still holding it tight in her hand, as if it were her only possession. It was simple enough to get in; but not having a cat's whiskers to measure the entrance, she cannot get out again. The slats of the lattice pushed inward and sprung apart easily at the touch of the child's body; but now, as she attempts to return, their jagged ends

are pressing into her neck and shoulders, holding and hurting her at every movement she makes.

Your dream-river does not stop now; nothing can stop it altogether; but a large part of its flow seems to whirl like an eddy around one definite point, as you focus all your faculties upon the task of getting the child out of her trouble without hurting her. You have been in such trouble yourself, and memory rises instantly out of your dream-river to offer her services. Reason follows speedily, as you carefully compare the narrow entrance with the width of the child's shoulders. You break some of the slats, cut the splintered ends of others with your knife, make the entrance wider, and so bring the little one safely out. For the child herself this might take hours of mental effort, while a man would accomplish the same thing so quickly and, apparently, thoughtlessly that he might deceive himself and say that his action was purely mechanical, with no thought whatever about it. Nevertheless, in your own head certainly, and probably also in that of the child, a certain process has been going on which is called reasoning; and we are ready now to understand just what it is.

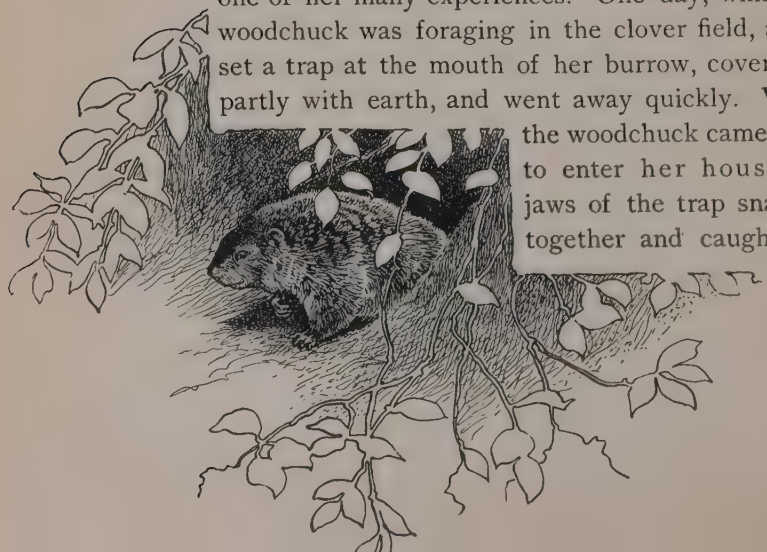
The process begins with what your psychologists call attention and concentration; that is, you call a halt in the endless procession of your fancies and sensations — try to stop your dream-river, as it were — in order to focus all your faculties on some

one point, just as a rabbit goes leisurely through a whole garden of vegetables until he finds a carrot or hears the hoot of a hound on his trail. Then follows a process which you understand in your own head, in a general way, but which you find slippery and elusive enough when you attempt to express it definitely in words. As your great Augustine said of time, "If you ask me what it is, I know not; but if you ask me not, then I know."

Indeed, this process in your head, though simple and familiar enough to yourself, has set all your philosophers at loggerheads and at hurling ponderous volumes at each other when they attempt to define it exactly; and so the Rabbit will not weary you by repeating all that he has heard. The essence of it all is this, — that you first try to analyze the object of your attention, that is, to separate it into its parts by a series of mental states or pictures. Thus, in the case of the little girl, you analyze her present difficulty, note the inward slant of the slats, the width of the entrance, the pressure of the child's neck and shoulders when she attempts to push outward, the width of her body and, in imagination, the size of a hole through which she can be drawn easily. After this process of analysis you form what is called a conclusion; that is, you have a new consciousness in your head which causes you to act intelligently in a certain way, which in this particular case causes you to make a larger

entrance and cut off the splintered edges so that the child may safely come out. The first part of this process, by which you analyze the object of your attention, is called thinking; the second, which adds something to your knowledge and which you recognize again under similar circumstances, is called a judgment or an act of reason. Your judgment, in this case, is that a twelve-inch body cannot without compression be drawn through a six-inch opening, and that converging sides, which spring apart easily when pressed from without, are bound to spring together when pressed from the opposite direction. And this, stripped of all the hard psychological names which have been given to it, is the rational process which goes on in your head when you hear the cry of a little child and help her out of her difficulty.

Now there lives on the other side of the Rabbit's brier patch an old mother woodchuck, who has outwitted all the dogs and fooled all the farmers' boys that have thus far tried to catch her; and this is one of her many experiences. One day, while the woodchuck was foraging in the clover field, a boy set a trap at the mouth of her burrow, covered it partly with earth, and went away quickly. When the woodchuck came back to enter her house the jaws of the trap snapped together and caught her



by one hind foot, just as the boy intended. By tugging desperately she managed after a time to jerk her foot free, leaving two of her toes fast in the trap. Finding such a burrow dangerous the woodchuck promptly abandoned it, moving with her little family to another burrow, which she dug on the upper edge of the clover field under the wall.

Weeks later, as mother woodchuck came out of her new habitation one day, the endless flow of her sensations, her pleasant impressions of the sunshiny world, and her sweet anticipations of the clover field and the neighboring bean patch, were suddenly arrested. What we have called her dream-river began suddenly to roll and eddy; for the earth was disturbed at the mouth of her burrow, and all the woodchuck's attention was promptly concentrated on another trap which the boy had clumsily hidden there. Memory rose instantly and alertly out of her dream-river; she remembered perfectly the previous painful experience with such things, and turned back into her den. Yet somehow she must get out, in order to give food to some little helpless woodchucks that were dependent upon her. After a few moments she came back cautiously until near the entrance, and then, instead of going out past the hidden trap, she began to dig a new tunnel upwards so as to avoid the danger. Roots and stones were in her way; but she cut the roots with her teeth, loosened the

stones with her paws, and so at last came to the surface in a safe place, some two feet away from the trap. The fresh earth from her digging, as she threw it behind her, had almost choked the entrance to her burrow, threatening the life of her young; so she turned around, went back to where her new tunnel branched from the old one, gathered the fresh earth under her belly with her fore paws, and with her hind feet kicked it carefully back into the old entrance, filling it up and completely burying the trap which the boy had hidden there.

Now in the mother woodchuck's head, as in your own when you think of this experience, a certain process was going on. And just here the Rabbit must emphasize the fact that each one knows surely only what goes on in his own head, and that the only way you can find out what goes on in another head is to remember what went on in you own under similar circumstances. In a word, you infer; you do not know surely; and all our knowledge of other minds is — fortunately for the peace of our own — purely an inference. So please remember what went on in your own head when you helped the child out of her difficulty, and then tell me honestly what it was that went on in the mother woodchuck's head when she came to the trap.

It may be said that the woodchuck has no words, and so she could not think about the trap or the danger; for, according to some of your scientists,

words are necessary to reasoning. To the Rabbit, that looks like another of the delusions of men, who use words, like Talleyrand, to conceal their thoughts, or else have grown so used to much talking and little thinking, like your queer stump speakers, that they find it impossible to think without a dictionary. As the Rabbit has pointed out in another meditation, some of your deaf-mutes have shown every evidence of logical thinking without words; and when you adapt means to an end it is not at all necessary to give names to the means which you are intelligently using. The Rabbit has heard of the new carriages that your children call buzz-carts, and that the Chinese call devil-wagons. Probably both child and Chinaman had reason enough to get out of the way, and to protest against the evil smells and habits of the machines, before they knew what to call them. Neither the child nor the man need name the slats or the lattice that imprisoned her; for child and man and animal all alike have vivid mental pictures, which are infinitely better in forming a prompt conclusion than any slow words, though one had the tongues of men and angels. Language, except as a method of expressing or concealing our thoughts, has nothing whatever to do with a large part of our thinking.

Of course all this refers to the simplest process of thought, and not to the elaborate searchings of self-consciousness, which are a kind of mental gymnastics

appearing late in the history of thought, and of which only a few trained minds are even now capable. Your boy must have thought and studied enough to enter college before he attempts to study psychology; and even then not one in a hundred is capable, like Hume, of examining his own ego and of determining the exact contents of his consciousness at any one moment. Judged by the animal's actions, which is the only possible way by which we can judge, he often thinks and reasons in a simple way, as children do, examining the object of his attention, recalling past experiences by memory, and using them to guide him intelligently in the face of new experiences.

It is possible, of course, that your psychologist's caged monkeys do not think (they alone of all animals have learned to copy some of men's vices), but all monkeys are not alike, and so the Rabbit ventures to tell here a monkey story of his own. A certain well-known lady, whose name would be recognized in more countries than our own if the Rabbit were to mention it, is fond of monkeys, for some purely feminine and therefore unaccountable reason, and always finds time to go to the monkey cage in the animal gardens of every city that she visits. In Philadelphia there was a certain old monkey that had grown sick from too much feeding at the hands of children. Therefore the keeper forbade visitors to feed the creature, and to make the matter quite sure, he put a fine wire net over

the cage, so that it was impossible to put even a peanut through it. One day the lady came to see the animals, bringing with her some bananas for her pets; and the first cage she approached had a fine wire screen over it, and a commandment written below, while within sat a very unhappy monkey. So long as the keeper was present the monkey, who had his eye on the bananas, made no movement; but when the keeper went away the monkey darted to a dark upper corner of his cage and thrust his paw out through a hole in the netting. Whether he had found it there, or had torn it himself, the Rabbit does not know. Spite of the prohibition, and struck by the humor of the situation, the lady attempted to feed him; but try as she would, she was not quite tall enough to reach a banana up to a point where the monkey could grasp it. Thereupon he went down to the bottom of his cage, found a piece of string, jumped back, poked one end of the string out through the hole, and let it down until the lady could reach it. She fastened the fruit to the string, and the next moment the monkey had pulled it up and was eating it.

The Rabbit ventures to suggest, before you question this lady's eyesight, that you consider carefully some rare records of apes and monkeys written by one Garner, who has studied the queer

creatures for many years, not only in cages but also in the African jungle. Or read Darwin's monkey stories, or the numerous records of French and German biologists, or Lockwood's memoirs, or — but why quote books, or even tell you another monkey or dog story, since you probably have a much better one yourself? That same true story of yours, if heard from a neighbor, would probably set your usually trustful looks somewhat askance; for the Rabbit, who has listened to many animal stories from men, must note this curious bit of human philosophy: that your doubtful man generally has an excellent animal story of his own, and somewhere near the beginning of it he invariably says, "I would not have believed it if I had not seen it myself." So it is perhaps better to open your own eyes than to open any new book, and much better to think a bit for yourself about what you have seen than to repeat the more or less thoughtless opinions which constitute the bulk of your daily reading and philosophy.

"How could an animal think? What has he to think with?" demanded the second naturalist. Now laying aside all dogmatism and prejudice as unworthy of our subject, such a question implies either a very profound philosophy, or else a somewhat callous indifference to contemporary biology on the part of your naturalist. Most of your own great biologists, like Bain and Bastian and Broca

and Haeckel, declare positively that animals think with their brains; they say that the organization of a certain part of the animal brain corresponds precisely to that part of the human brain which does all its thinking. Since in nature and everywhere else, excepting only that crazy place called Wall Street, similar causes are wont to produce similar results, these biologists are assured that, with such a brain organization as the higher animals possess, it would be practically impossible for them not to do more or less thinking.

As for the deep philosophy suggested unconsciously by this dogmatic question, the Rabbit hesitates to announce a positive opinion. He has confined himself heretofore to facts which you can easily test for yourself, either by your own observation or by the records of your scientists; but in the origin of thinking there are many obscure things which are yet to be considered carefully, and about which one can only hazard a modest opinion. Though your great biologists support the Rabbit's view, he cannot find true harmony in their philosophy, which supposes mere material brain changes to be the origin of all thinking. Thought and albumen, consciousness and chemical changes, are so utterly different that no sane philosophy can regard them as identical. All human philosophy and experience place spirit and matter in two distinct categories; and the biologists, who

deal exclusively with matter, are perhaps the least competent to deal with the more subtle manifestations of the spirit. Suppose for a moment that your scientist could see a hand slowly tracing out the characters and the thoughts which are expressed on this paper, and that all the rest of the body should be absolutely invisible and intangible. Watching this mysterious hand at work, your scientist would discover nerves and muscles and a multitude of cells, changing rapidly in strict accord with your knowledge of chemical action, and whose changes were perfectly measurable in terms of heat. That is all he would ever discover; and he would presently announce confidently that cell changes account for the hand's action, and that pure chemistry is a sufficient explanation for all that he sees.

Precisely so with your human brains, with their ceaseless activity accompanied by rapid cell changes, and also by the curious phenomena of thought and consciousness and magnificent ideals of love and faith and duty. The biologist, seeing only the brain, while the self remains forever invisible, would thoughtlessly conclude that the brain itself produces all your ideas, and that chemical forces are a sufficient explanation of your mental activity. But any rabbit who looks deeper than the surface, and who finds himself below the surface face to face with some invisible reality, must smile at any

such childish explanation. If electricity were personal and could speak, probably the first thing it would tell you is that it is not at all dependent for its existence upon the wires over which it runs so continuously. So, if the power behind your brain could speak for one instant, it might tell you that the albumen in your heads is only the material agent through which it expresses its activity. Indeed, the Rabbit is sometimes forced to think, with some of your best psychologists, that the brain merely receives and transmits thought, and has in itself no creative power whatever. So it is like all the rest of the material world, the expressive agent of some large and purely spiritual force.

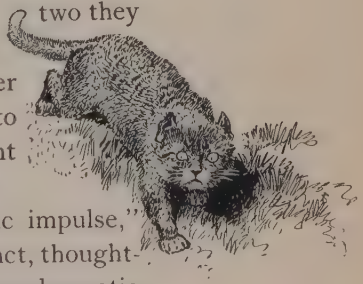
Whether it be true or not that an animal thinks with his brain, or with that unknown thing within him that he calls himself; whether the brain is the source of his thinking, or is, like his paw, only an instrument that the greater self uses for his own ends, — the Rabbit does not surely know; nor has he ever listened to any man who could tell him, though he listens patiently to old and young, to wise and foolish, for some small crumb of knowledge that each can furnish. He thinks, with some small reason perhaps, that most men think very little for themselves, but take their opinions ready-made from others; that some of your scientists are apt to be loudly positive about things that the wise consider in silence; and that you are

generally rather careless in regard to the rights of creatures who are weaker than yourselves, but who must share with you the joy and the burden of a life that has always, even in its lowest forms, some sacredness and infinite mystery surrounding it.

So the Rabbit goes back to his brier patch and thinks again about these things. He is not sure of himself; he knows too little; and the universe, even of a brier patch, is too big to comprehend. The river of his own life carries him on and on through it, and so he is like a fish trying in vain to understand the ocean in which it swims. As no age understands itself, but must wait for the judgment of the future; as your Galileo could never see the movement of the earth until, in imagination, he had lifted himself above it; and as your Kant could never determine the categories of your thinking until, by a supreme effort, he put himself outside the conditions which limit all your human thoughts, — so undoubtedly we will never understand this amazing life of ours until some power lifts us high enough to look down upon it from a larger and more permanent state of existence.

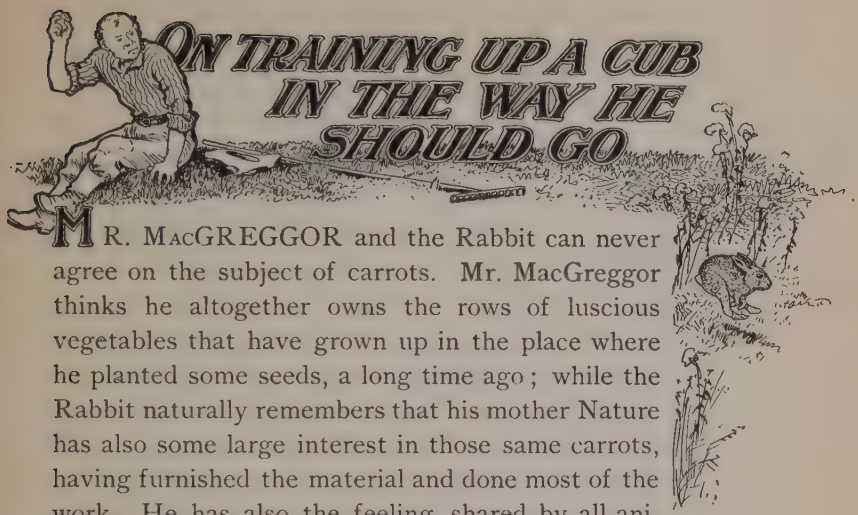
Meanwhile, as the Rabbit thinks, an interesting little comedy is being played out in the fields, beyond the brier patch, and a thoughtful man is watching it with the Rabbit. There are two little birds, a mother and a fledgling, on the ground; and the mother is teaching, or helping, the little

one to catch things to eat. Suddenly a cat appears behind them, crouching and creeping; and her eyes are like phosphorescent wood when it glows at night. Nearer and nearer she creeps. Her eyes blaze out; her uneasy tail straightens like a rod; she leaps forward, just as the mother bird sees her and springs into the air with a sharp cry of alarm and warning. The little one tries to follow her, but he has not yet learned to use his wings perfectly, and can only skim along the ground in his fright, without the power to rise. Three jumps does the cat make; a fourth and she will strike down her game, when like a flash the mother shoots under her fledgling and with a swift upward rush *boosts* him into a tree beyond the cat's reach. A moment or two they rest there, while the cat glowers upon them from the grass; then the mother leads her little one in level flight to another tree on the edge of the distant woods, beyond all thought of danger.



"All mechanical, a purely automatic impulse," says the monkey-cage man. "Just instinct, thoughtless, unreasoning instinct," echoes the dogmatic naturalist. But the man who saw it all seems to be thoughtful about it. Perhaps, like the Rabbit in his brier patch, he is wondering what he would call it if his own wife had saved his little child from danger in the same prompt and effective way.

ON TRAINING UP A CUB IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO



MR. MACGREGGOR and the Rabbit can never agree on the subject of carrots. Mr. MacGreggor thinks he altogether owns the rows of luscious vegetables that have grown up in the place where he planted some seeds, a long time ago; while the Rabbit naturally remembers that his mother Nature has also some large interest in those same carrots, having furnished the material and done most of the work. He has also the feeling, shared by all animals and men, that when he is hungry he has an inborn right to as much of his mother's mercies as will satisfy his needs. Therefore he helps himself to the carrots; and therefore Mr. MacGreggor sets traps for him, or chases him with a rake whenever he notices an evident difference in our philosophy of the kindly universe. But all Mr. MacGreggor's ideas of ownership must be viewed with toleration, as he is the victim of habit. He thinks, for instance, that he also owns a horse and a yoke of oxen and five cows and a lot of chickens and forty acres of land, when in fact they own him and have for years made him the slave of their unending necessities. Poor

man, he can't even go to church of a Sunday unless the cows come back from pasture in time to let him.

Now this questionable little garden of carrots is very much like your great field of education. So many years have you men cultivated it, and taken pride in its products, and called them all your own, that for a simple rabbit to claim any share in its mercies is to be promptly hunted back into his brier patch by some irate scientist who has no philosophy. You forget sometimes that your education, like the carrots, is not a manufactured article, but just a seed which has grown up largely under Nature's friendly influences. So the question was bound to be raised, Does not the wild animal also have some share in this common mercy? Over against the claim of your scientists, that instinct is the animal's only teacher and that he receives no education whatever from his parents, certain field naturalists, who shake the dust of museums out of their eyes and look on life as it is, set up a new philosophy. They maintain that instinct is altogether overworked in your natural histories; that it furnishes but a third part of the animal's mental assets; that the mother's training and the cub's own experience contribute the other two thirds; and that, without these, instinct would be of little value to one of the higher orders of animals, either in getting his living or in keeping alive in the face of numerous enemies, who have

obviously more instinct or education than himself. In a word, they claim that the animal must cultivate his natural instincts by a process somewhat resembling that which men use in raising a carrot from a seed, or in raising a child to man's estate. Here then is another problem, more complex than that of animal thinking, which the Rabbit must examine in the light of his philosophy.

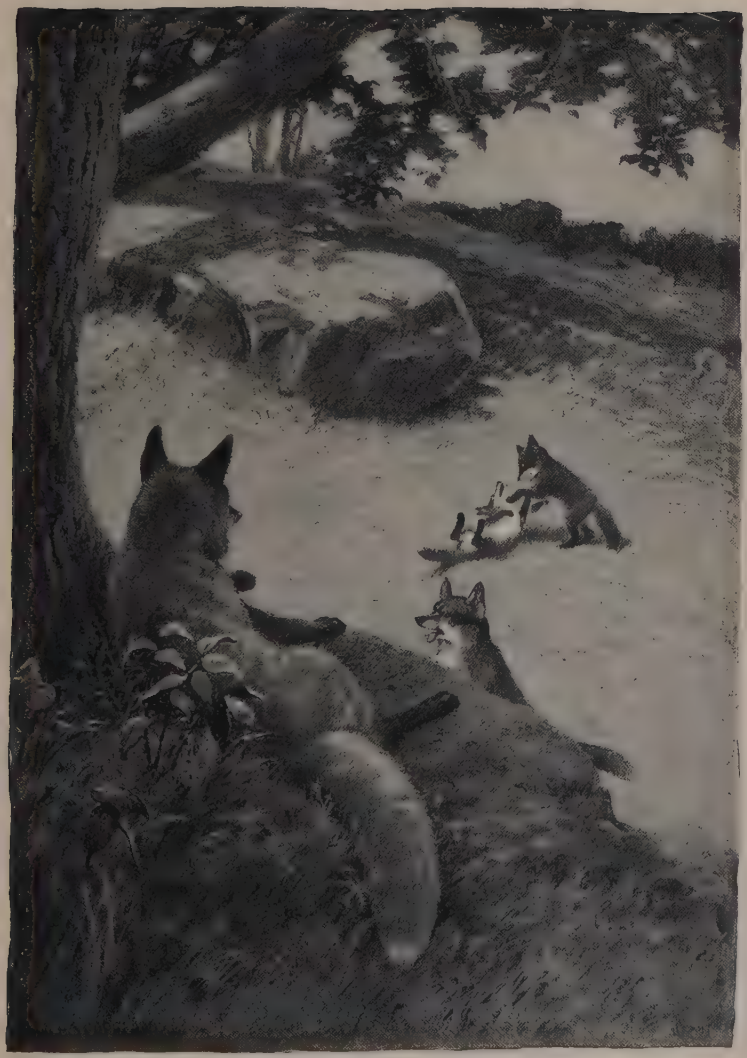
You have noticed, perhaps, that when you wish to find a rabbit it is better to follow the first track you see, rather than wander aimlessly over the face of the country kicking at empty brush piles; so, since we all agree that animals have instincts, let us begin there to follow the trail. Never mind now the question of what instinct is, or where it comes from. To answer that question is to follow the back trail, only to find where your rabbit slept last night, and another endless back trail stretching before you, until you lose your animal altogether in the maze of the day-before-yesterday.

Without attempting, therefore, to find the common origin of our instincts, we may note five strong tendencies on the part of every little cub born into a world of tribulation. The first is to take food when he is hungry; and that, while not altogether mechanical — being somewhat governed by taste, and so unlike the spring of a rabbit when his back is touched — is perhaps as near to an unreasoning action as you will ever find in an animal.

The second tendency is to lie perfectly still when threatened by unknown dangers; for Nature has colored every little cub to match his surroundings, and so to be almost invisible. Moreover, the odor of young animals is reduced to a minimum when they are perfectly still; and that is the protection which thoughtful Nature gives them against prowling noses. This second tendency is probably not so mechanical as the first; for the young sometimes disobey its promptings, and then you may see a mother animal cuffing or biting an uneasy cub to make him lie still until the danger passes by.

The third tendency, or instinct, is to cry out for help when in trouble; and this, as will be shown in another meditation, may suggest the origin of natural religion. For it were surely most foolish in a rational universe to give a cub or a man an instinct to cry out for help, unless some great Thoughtfulness had also provided that the cry should be heard by some superior power having the will to hear and to heed the appeal.

The fourth instinct is to play, as the little muscles develop their hidden power; and play, as you have at last observed, and have applied the hint in your kindergartens, is the universal educator. By it the little animal learns to jump and dodge and hide, and so to bring every muscle into perfect training against the time when it will be necessary to save his life. Your children manifest the same



"The fourth instinct is to play"

instinct, and did you but follow it yourselves, instead of shutting yourselves up most unreasonably to unrelieved monotony, you would have no need whatever for your queer gymnasiums.

The fifth instinct, one of the strongest and most suggestive of all, is for the helpless and ignorant creature to follow and obey the first large living thing near him when he comes into the world. Fortunately for the young animal this strong living thing near him, which he instinctively follows, is his own mother; but the instinct is so strong that he obeys it from the first, even when some other animal takes the mother's place. Witness young chicks, which will follow and let themselves be mothered by any living creature, from a duck to a cat, their natural enemy, which chances to be near them when they chip the shell.

So many instances are recorded of young cubs following some other than their own mother, of young rats and puppies, for instance, following contentedly when adopted by mother cats, that it is needless for the Rabbit to multiply instances. The latest and most interesting case is that of a young bear cub, which was taken by a woman in a Maine village and fed at the breast with her own baby; and the cub, as observed and recorded by one of your own teachers, ran to the woman and followed and fed from her as readily as if she had been his own mother. The Rabbit mentions these things

On training up a cub in the way he should go

simply to emphasize the instinct — which he has named last, though it is one of the first and most important to the young cub — to follow and obey the signals of his superiors. For it is obvious that the germ of whatever education he may obtain will lie in the cultivation of this natural instinct.

Another interesting matter becomes manifest if you follow the Rabbit's trail a step farther, namely, that aided by these instincts, or sometimes apparently entirely apart from them, all animals have the ability to learn things that ordinarily would never come within range of their knowledge. For instance, experience is decidedly a teacher; and that animals learn from their own experience is too well known to admit of argument. Men also are teachers to the animals, which change their habits readily, as you may have noticed, when they find themselves in the neighborhood of men's dwellings. Sometimes the training is conscious on the man's part, as when he takes a wolf and trains him to guard his house and even to protect his sheep. Indeed, take any of the higher orders, from the mouse to the elephant, and you can teach them a multitude of things that neither they nor their ancestors ever knew instinctively. At the very outset, therefore, we are face to face with a most important educational principle, namely, that all animals have the capacity to learn, either from experience or from men or from any other educative

and non-instinctive influence which happens to cross their path.

Another step on the trail and another thing becomes evident. Not only have animals the ability to learn, but they have also the desire for knowledge. All the higher orders are intensely curious, and what is curiosity but the manifestation of a desire to know? If you disregard the hunters, who disturb the peace, and the ornithologists, who think they are studying birds when they are only collecting eggs and specimens, and if you sit down quietly in the wilderness anywhere, you will speedily see this curiosity for yourself and wonder at its universality. The jays and the squirrels and the little wild birds will come to peek at you, and chatter and flutter their wings in your face in order to make you move, and in a dozen ways show that they desire to know more about the strange creature which they have never seen before, and which their instincts cannot understand. Larger animals also — the deer that comes to a waving flag, the moose that hears your ax and steals up to investigate the strange sound, even the shy fox and the timid bear, which invariably circle any strange object so as to both see and smell it — all tell you the same story of this widespread curiosity, which is the beginning of knowledge.

We have followed the trail far enough now to be quite sure of two suggestive things, which have

On training up a cub in the way he should go

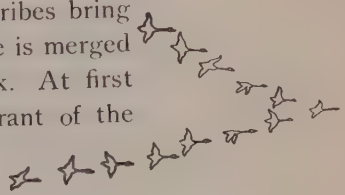
thus far been overlooked in your discussion of animal education. Animals have both the desire and the ability to learn more than they instinctively know; and it would seem at first glance unnatural and absurd to suppose that nature gave so great a gift and spread it wide among the animals, only to forget it and leave it utterly unused. Indeed, in your own experience you find the only suggestion that will explain the gift to the animal.

Now you men have an instinct or tendency to question and so to acquire knowledge. With this tendency is another, which, in view of all your past experience, is quite as strong as the first, namely, to impart your knowledge to those who are dependent upon you. All your complex social civilization rests squarely upon these two tendencies, — to learn and to impart your knowledge to others. Those of your children who are unfortunately separated from the latter tendency become inevitably outcasts. That is why you insist upon education, and that is why your teachers do the noblest work that is done among you.

It seems, to the Rabbit, only a reasonable question to ask at this moment, Where did you get these two tendencies, — to learn and to impart your knowledge to your children? The animals undoubtedly possess the first; and if your great naturalists and biologists are right in saying that your tendencies are inborn from past states of

existence, and that all which is now written large in you was once written small in the animal, then the question is already answered, and the tendency to learn and to teach is a universal one. In that case — and present observations of your naturalists, as well as the animal lore of the Indians, tend to support the proposition — the gregarious life of animals is, like your own social civilization, founded squarely and absolutely upon some inborn animal tendency to learn and to impart knowledge, however elementary, to those that are young and ignorant.

Aside from this direct inference that animals educate their young, many other things point to the same conclusion. All birds and animals are, like men, more or less gregarious; many of them, like the wolves and caribou and crows, have well-defined social regulations; and the young must in some manner train themselves, or be trained, so that the individual will shall not be in conflict with the will of the community. In the spring the herd or flock scatters into family groups, as you still keep your family life apart from the community, and for a little season the young birds and animals are under the direct care of their own parents. In the fall many of the wild tribes bring their young together, and the family life is merged in the larger life of the pack or flock. At first the older members are extremely tolerant of the



ignorant and inexperienced youngsters; but as time passes and social regulations become known, all alike are held to strict account, and any infringement means that the offender shall be made an outcast, or even punished or killed, by the community. To say that the knowledge of these social regulations is instinctive in the young animal not only contradicts the observations of your naturalists, but is, upon the face of it, as unwarranted and unnecessary a proposition as to say that your boys and girls have an inborn knowledge of social requirements. They have, like the animal, a social tendency; the rest is entirely a matter of training and experience.

It may be said, in explanation of the herd life of animals, that, as with the ants and bees, a common impulse seizes all the animals at once and guides them so that their interests never clash. That means, of course, that besides the instinct of the individual there is a kind of flock instinct, and that while the latter is operative the former must be suspended. The Rabbit thinks that this is stretching instinct to the breaking-point, and he finds nothing in himself or in his fellows to warrant the supposition. It is by no means certain that there is any such thing as a flock instinct, even among the insects, which strikes a thousand individuals with precisely the same impulse at precisely the same instant. If that

happened once it would be a wonder ; if it happened twice it were surely a miracle. Your naturalists, Lubbock and Herbert, have shown that ants and bees probably have some reasoning power, as well as instinct ; but that is another brier patch. Unlike the bee, whose whole life is spent as a part of the swarm, and who rarely, if ever, has a moment of individual will or liberty, all gregarious animals and birds have their elementary training as individuals in their own families. The mother checks one and encourages another and punishes a third, according to their several dispositions, as you may see for yourself in a litter of fox or dog or wolf cubs. Their community life comes later, as a new thing ; and there is nothing whatever, either in their life-history or their actions, to warrant the supposition that they are blindly governed by some vague thing called a herd instinct entirely apart from all their previous training and experience.

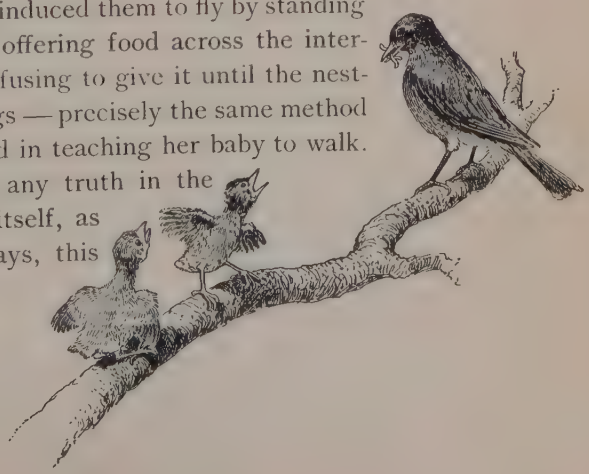
A single instance will indicate the probable truth of the Rabbit's philosophy. You have a race of dogs called collies, and think that they have some inborn tendency to care for your sheep. Such a tendency, if it exists at all outside your imagination, is in direct opposition to the original instinct of the collie, which was to kill the same sheep and eat them whenever he was hungry ; and the alleged new tendency was brought about first by man's taming the wild animal and educating

him for his own purposes, and then by more training of the cubs on the part of the mother animals. And even now, after centuries in your hands, if you should take a collie pup at birth and give him to a wild mother wolf who had lost her cubs, he would inevitably join his foster-mother and her pack in raiding the sheepfolds. In a word, the natural instincts of the collie and the wolf are identical; their different actions in the presence of sheep are wholly the result of differences in their early training and environment.

It seems, therefore, that every gregarious animal, man included, must have education to supplement his instinct; and here the Rabbit ventures timidly to call your attention to the meaning of education. A Latin scholar has told him that it is found in the word itself, *e-ducate*, that is, not to pack something new into a helpless infant, but rather to *lead out* some good thing that there is already there, as you educe the larger life of a seed by putting it in proper environment. One of your greatest teachers, who was called Froebel, had precisely this idea of education; therefore he called his schools "gardens" — children, or *Kinder*, gardens — and his teachers "child-gardeners"; and the Rabbit cannot help thinking that if you would stop packing into your children the enormous mass of stuff that passes for knowledge among you, and would try instead to draw out the individuality

and strength that sleep in every child, you would develop a nobler race of men and women. But that also is another brier patch, which has grown up because of your living too much in crowds, and it will not be cleared until all your mothers go back to their primitive function and to the joy of teaching their own children.

To illustrate the Rabbit's idea of education, he has seen a human mother teaching her child to walk, supporting him at first, leaving him for a moment, stretching out her hands as an invitation for him to cross an intervening space alone, and at last kissing him rapturously when he responded to her inducements. The Rabbit has also watched a mother robin with her young, when it was time for them to leave the nest and they did not want to go. She brought food and stood at a distance offering it. The young clamored at first, but received no food until they came out of the nest and hitched along a branch to where the mother was waiting. That was a first lesson, and the Rabbit watched with interest as the mother induced them to fly by standing on another branch, offering food across the intervening space, and refusing to give it until the nestlings used their wings — precisely the same method that the woman used in teaching her baby to walk.



Now if there be any truth in the word "education" itself, as the Latin man says, this

woman and this mother robin were both true educators, that is, by example and inducement they were bringing out the native powers of their offspring.

"But," you say, "the young robins would learn to fly by themselves, without teaching." Undoubtedly. But if you take one young bird from the nest, you will find to your surprise that he learns slowly alone, and stretches his wings impotently long after his brothers and sisters from the same nest are able to fly. And it is absolutely essential that young birds, after leaving the nest and becoming conspicuous, should learn to fly at once, in order to escape their numerous enemies. Without their mothers' teaching at this moment very few birds would survive long enough to learn to fly by themselves. So would the baby learn to walk without its mother; so could your scholar learn Latin by himself; but that does not change the fact that mothers and schools offer teaching to help out the natural endowments of children. The point is that all mothers teach, each in her own way, and that in every mother's heart there is as strong a tendency to teach as to acquire wisdom; otherwise herds of animals and cities of men would be alike impossible.

The question will be asked at once — for it is astonishing how little men have learned of the real life of animals — Is not all this action of the wild mother a blind, instinctive impulse, without thought

or reason, and so without any true teaching in it? As the Rabbit has ventured to suggest in other meditations, he finds perhaps less blindness among animals than among some of the superior beings who of late classify them superficially, and who forget Darwin's wonder at finding so little blind impulse and so much reasonable intelligence in his dog's head. As a mere suggestion of the truth, the Rabbit passes over a hundred instances to speak of the very last animal he has been watching.

Near to the brier patch is an old cat that, to the Rabbit's personal knowledge, has brought up four litters of kittens. The cat, like most of her tribe, is a stupid creature, and one of her characteristics is that, being too well fed perhaps, she has never been known to catch a mouse, though there are plenty of mice in her house, and she spends many hours each summer day in hunting the young robins. Not one of her numerous kittens has ever caught or tried to catch a mouse, so far as known; and the naturalist who lives near the brier patch has been experimenting on the last two litters. When the kittens are well grown, and try to catch birds like their mother, the naturalist puts one of them in a barrel with a live mouse; and the mouse runs about freely and even scampers over the kitten's head, while she makes no effort whatever to catch it.

Near by is another cat, a good mouser, and all her kittens take after her, not by instinct apparently,

On training up a cub in the way he should go

but because of the mother's training. Many times the Rabbit has seen the old cat bring a wounded mouse to her kittens, and put it down before them, and set them to chasing and worrying it. And curiously enough, the kittens are generally shy at first, and refuse to have anything to do with the unknown creature; but they imitate the mother, as she apparently plays with the game, and speedily learn to pounce upon and hold it.

Lately the Rabbit watched with interest a very suggestive bit of their training. All but one of the litter were put away, and the old cat brought home an unusually lively mouse and put it down in an open space before her kitten. He had been given some experience before, and immediately started after the mouse. The mouse got away, and the mother went flying after it and brought it back herself. A second time the mouse escaped the kitten and had to be brought back by the old cat. Then, holding the mouse in her mouth, the mother cuffed the kitten soundly and again set the game down before him. He caught it this time, and the mother watched steadily as he bit the mouse savagely and let it go and caught it again without trouble.

Now, if there be any truth in the Rabbit's psychology — which is chiefly the knowledge of what goes on under his own ears — there was certainly nothing blind or unconscious about that particular training.

Among the wild animals the same thing goes on unseen at every springtime and in every woodlot. Here, for instance, are a mother fox and her litter of cubs, in a bank by a brook, far back in the pasture of a New England farm. The Rabbit mentions these details almost unconsciously, because he has often hidden in the juniper bushes across the little brook and watched the foxes playing there. The old mother has been hunted for years by dogs and men; she knows the danger of steel traps, and the difference between chickens that belong to the farmer and grouse that belong to anybody who can catch them. She can tell in an instant, either by sight or hearing, the difference between the dangerous hound, that can follow her unseen trail all day long, and the farm dog that is harmless the moment she dodges out of his sight; and she knows perfectly the ways of every little creature, of frogs and mice and grasshoppers and ducks and quail and turkeys, upon which she depends for her good living. The cubs know nothing of these things, having been brought up in a hole in the bank where these shy creatures never enter alive, and possessing as their stock of knowledge only the five primary instincts to which we have referred.

Now watch that mother fox and her cubs as they go out into the big world. Yonder is a pile of chaff; the mice are burrowing abundantly beneath

it; but there is also a steel trap hidden under the chaff by the farmer's boy. The cubs smell the mice and hear them squeaking; they are hungry; they like mice, having dined of them at many a feast. They start forward eagerly to catch a few; but see, the old mother draws them aside and all together they circle the chaff warily. A cautious step forward, every cub watching the mother; then she scrapes aside the chaff with one cautious paw, gently as a butterfly hovering over a flower, and discovers the end of an iron chain that the chaff had hidden. Whereupon she turns away, and all the cubs go trotting contentedly after her to the meadow and take to hunting mice where they are less abundant. So with the dog and the chickens, — how cautious their approach to the farmyard, so different from their heedless gambols as they scamper through the woods and the wild meadow. There are so many things in the big world that are new and strange to the cubs; but they watch the old mother, in whom they have confidence, and in her own way she seems to be sharing whatever little crumbs of knowledge she may possess, as freely as ever she shared the mice and turkeys, with her heedless and ignorant offspring.

There is another way, very suggestive to a rabbit mind, in which you can perhaps settle the question for yourselves by simple experiments; and this is a case in which the mother's training seems

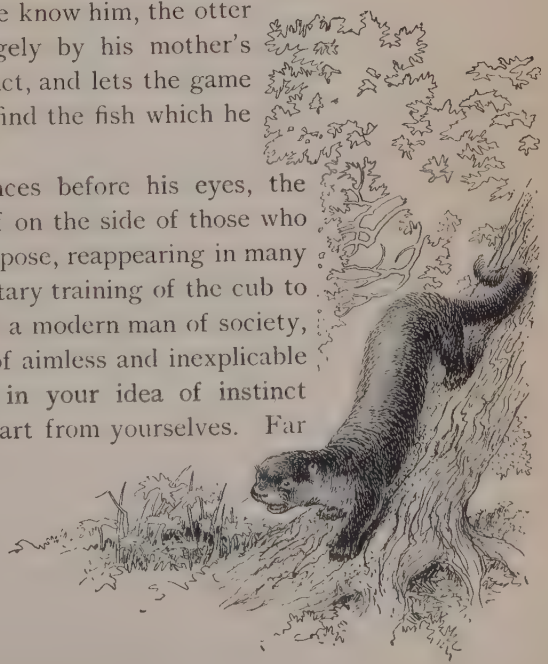
to overcome a strong natural instinct of her little ones. The osprey, as you know, belongs to the hawk family, and is like all the large hawks in his general physical and mental characteristics. So far as the young osprey has any instinct for food, it is probably like that of all the rest of his tribe. For uncounted generations the hawks have been hunters, sailing over the woods and fields for mice and rabbits and small feathered game; and if you take a young osprey from the nest and feed him on his natural food, he will, as soon as his wings are grown, take naturally to the woods and hunt like any other big hawk.

The mother osprey, however, who had the same instincts but who was trained by her other mother to fish instead of hunt, takes the education of her nestlings entirely out of the hands of nature, whom you have supposed to be their only teacher. She feeds them on fish instead of game, and as soon as they are able to fly she avoids the woods and takes them to where fish are shoaling in shallow water. She fishes with them, often helps them in their efforts, and when the young in their eagerness keep close to the water, where the waves and the reflections confuse their eyes, she calls them up higher, where they can see every fish perfectly. And when they fail in their first efforts she invariably catches a fish for them to encourage them. Some of your naturalists assert from personal

observation that, like the cat, she sometimes wounds or paralyzes the fish and drops it back into the water, in order that her young may at first more easily catch it. In any case the result is the same; the young stay with the mother and learn from her all the autumn; they follow her to the coast in winter, and by the next spring the old hawk instinct to hunt the woods is entirely overcome by the mother's training. Thereafter the young osprey is a fisherman, not a hunter as nature intended him to be.

There may, of course, be exceptions to this rule; for the ospreys have been catching fish so long that possibly fishing is becoming an instinct. It is an open question, however, whether or not an acquired habit can, even by the practice of centuries, ever become a tendency strong enough in itself to supplant a natural instinct; and this is a matter to be determined by future observation. In the case of three young fish-hawks, which the Rabbit has chanced to watch at different times, the results were the same. The young birds, as soon as they were able to fly, showed that the old hawk instinct was strong within them. They began swooping at chickens; one osprey was killed because of his destructiveness; the other two escaped to the woods to hunt; and not one of them, as far as they were observed, showed any tendency to catch fish or even to hover over the lake, as he would have done had his mother been there to show him the way.

In the family of the weasels you have probably a similar case. The weasels are all instinctively hunters; but the mink is half fisherman, half hunter, and the otter is altogether a fisherman. Only when the streams are frozen to the bottom, or when fish fail for some reason, does the otter break away from his mother's training and go back to the old weasel instinct of hunting the woods. He is a quick and powerful hunter, when the need arises; like most of his tribe he confidently attacks animals much larger than himself, and even climbs trees readily, like the martens and fishers. Whether or not the otter, if taken very young from his mother and fed on game, would be a hunter pure and simple, like the rest of his tribe, the Rabbit does not know until some one tries the interesting experiment. So far as we know him, the otter seems to be guided largely by his mother's training, not by his instinct, and lets the game alone so long as he can find the fish which he was taught to follow.



With all these evidences before his eyes, the Rabbit must put himself on the side of those who see in nature a single purpose, reappearing in many forms, from the rudimentary training of the cub to the complex education of a modern man of society, rather than a multitude of aimless and inexplicable cross-purposes involved in your idea of instinct as something entirely apart from yourselves. Far

from being an impossibility, or a pure invention of your nature-writers, teaching seems to be a natural tendency among all the higher orders of animals.

With this tendency — since nature rarely leaves a work half done — is a supplementary tendency on the part of all young animals to follow and imitate their elders until their own powers are full-grown. Whether you watch your own children, or the monkey's cage, or the wolf's den, or any of the little wild families of the woods and fields, you see the same general tendency on the part of young cubs to imitate the older animals, whose wisdom is greater than their own. The time of this tendency is usually short, for as the individual will develops the young animal grows less and less imitative, and depends more and more on his own strength and experience; hence the necessity for early training. But the tendency is never wholly lost, either among animals or men, as you may see in a herd of deer, which will move up to examine any new object that one of their number has discovered; or in your own dog, who naturally examines what you stop to examine, and who shows plainly that he is curious about any object or incident that rouses your own curiosity.

An extreme and unusual bit of this tendency was shown a few days ago, while the Rabbit was watching a small boy and a dog playing together. The boy was called by his mother to fill the woodbox in the kitchen; and the dog, after sniffing all over

the woodpile and the woodbox, began to pick up chips in his mouth and carry them in, as the boy was doing. He had never been taught this thing, nor did he probably reason about it, but simply followed the natural tendency among all animals to imitate their superiors.

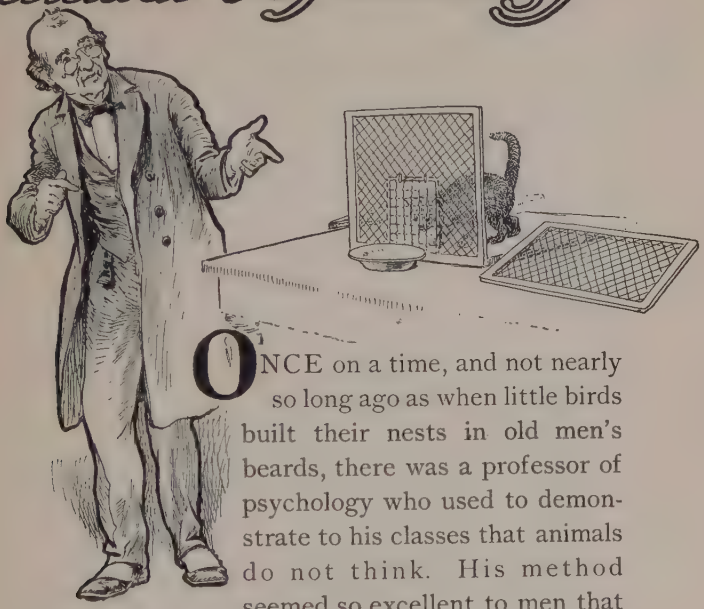
For a century or more your bird-hunters have made use of these two tendencies in their dogs. The Rabbit has watched them in the fields, and has noticed how much more quickly young setters and pointers learn their business — which, by the way, goes against their natural instinct — when the old dog is there to show them how. Indeed, a wise dog-trainer generally allows the old dog to do most of the training for him; and many cases are on record of mother pointers and setters returning and punishing their young severely when they flushed their birds too eagerly and carelessly in spite of the mother's example.

So we have in nature an apparently perfect educational arrangement. The old animals naturally share their knowledge and experience with their helpless offspring; the young naturally imitate their elders and remember their experiences. If there be no schools in nature, as some of your naturalists declare, then the Rabbit wonders what would be left to work upon in your human institutions if these purely natural factors, that are busy in the animal, were suddenly taken away from your children.

Thinking of all these things, of the animal's curiosity, of his ability to learn, of his tendency to follow and to imitate his superiors, of his vivid memory of past experiences, and of that strong mother instinct to keep her little ones from whatever evil and to lead them to whatever good she knows, — remembering all this, the Rabbit hopped up to one of your kindergartens recently and watched a teacher and her pupils at work and at play together. At first all seemed strange and unnatural; but looking below the surface for the eternal principles of things, the Rabbit saw on the one hand the divine unselfishness of wisdom, sharing itself freely with the helpless, and on the other the unconscious tribute of ignorance in following and imitating the wisdom that was doubtless put there for some good purpose, — precisely the same old principles that he had seen in the brier patch ever since he was born.

Animal Psychology

Animal Psychology



ONCE on a time, and not nearly so long ago as when little birds built their nests in old men's beards, there was a professor of psychology who used to demonstrate to his classes that animals do not think. His method seemed so excellent to men that they still use it in the university, and it seems so queer to the Rabbit that he must look at it a moment through the spectacles of his philosophy.

The professor had taken a very young kitten from its own mother and confined it in a wire cage. In the cage was a trap-door, and just outside the door some food was regularly placed for the psychological kitten. When hungry she would naturally

go to the food and mew, whereupon the trap-door was promptly opened; and this process of training was continued, day after day, until the kitten would always go to this particular door and wait to be fed. When the process of training was completed the professor brought the whole outfit into his psychology class.

Here the Rabbit ventures to state the pretty little problem as it was presented to the Argonauts, seeking eagerly for the golden fleece of a cat's ego. Given the cat *a*, the cage *b*, the trap-door *c*, the food *d*. We are to prove from *b*, *c*, and *d*, that is, from a wire cage, a trap-door, and a dish of skimmed milk, that *d* does not think. For such is your naïve conception of the animal mind that its quality may be determined by a purely quantitative analysis. You begin, of course, by assuming what you wish to prove, that the cat's mind is a purely mechanical arrangement, with no more individual will than the lines and angles of a parallelogram.

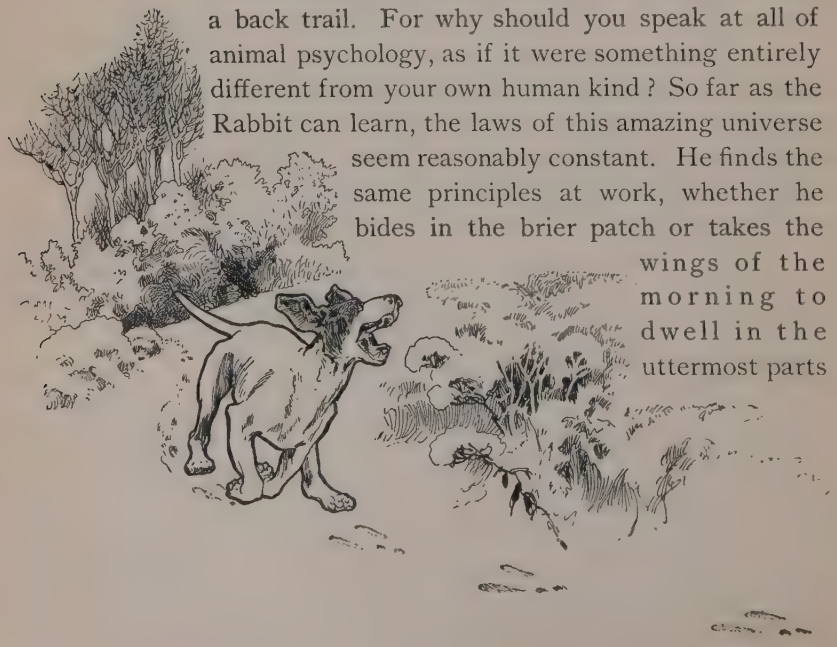
While the psychology class waited expectantly the trained kitten was placed in the cage, the trap-door was closed, and food was placed just outside the door as usual. The whole rear of the cage was then taken away; but notwithstanding this new way to liberty, the kitten stood mewing at her own trap-door. Next the top of the cage, then the two sides were removed, and only the front was left between the kitten and her dinner; but still she

waited at the door and refused to take a single step around the obstruction in order to eat. "Therefore," said the professor triumphantly, "animals do not think; they are altogether creatures of habit and reflex action." In a word, they are not willful animals but *automata*, the *bêtes machines*, as the Belgian hare says, of Descartes' ancient and primitive philosophy.

Now, to the Rabbit, that looks like strange doctrine to be dispensed even to those guileless young men who study their psychology in a monkey cage or by a nest of guinea-pigs; and there are some things about it that call for a critical commentary. You can, of course, make a fool of any cat or child, if you catch him young enough and train him judiciously; but only a human and very modern psychologist would infer from this proposition that animals and men are governed by reflex action. Suppose, for instance, that your professor had placed in the same cage an ordinary hungry cat, without the benefit of his psychological training; and that, after taking away one side of the cage, pussy had promptly bolted out and eaten the food. Would that be a demonstration of the fact that all untrained animals think, and are therefore rational creatures? The Rabbit knows one intelligent dog that, without training, will take no food from strangers, but only from certain people whom he trusts. Perhaps the professor's cat was but waiting

for the hand that cherished her to open the door, and saying in her heart, "Better a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and experimental psychology therewith." Certainly, from what he has seen of cats, the Rabbit is forced to the conclusion that, if the misguided kitten had been left to her own mother's training, she might have shown more intelligence than she did after an exhaustive course with the Columbia professor. And all these things have set the Rabbit to thinking in his brier patch, to find out, if possible, how much sweet reasonableness there is in your methods and theories of animal psychology.

The first thought which occurs to the Rabbit's philosophy is that possibly your animal psychologists are unconsciously imitating a young hound that occasionally goes hunting rabbits hereabouts, and that always barks loudest when he is running a back trail. For why should you speak at all of animal psychology, as if it were something entirely different from your own human kind? So far as the Rabbit can learn, the laws of this amazing universe seem reasonably constant. He finds the same principles at work, whether he bides in the brier patch or takes the wings of the morning to dwell in the uttermost parts



of the sea or the interstellar spaces. He has never heard your wise scientists speak of an animal physics or an animal chemistry, that is, a science or a law that applies to the beast but that changes its operation when it enters a man. If you and your dog fall from a cliff together, you give yourselves over to a law that brooks no interference and that makes no distinction between you. You measure the energy of animals and men alike in terms of heat, and your biologists are even trying to determine the exact ratio between emotions and the destruction of brain tissue. Like us, your blood grows poisoned when you are violently angry, and you lose physical weight when you fall in love. So if, as your scientists claim, there be any unity in the force or the God that thinks these laws of the universe and the brier patch, then the laws of his mind are probably also constant. Any truth, therefore, which you discover about your own mind — which constitutes your psychology — must apply to any mind in the universe wherever you find it, whether in heaven or hell, in the brier patch or in the professor's easy-chair. The only pertinent question is whether or not the animals have a mind.

Most of your scientists and biologists, from Darwin to the present day, agree that the animals have rudimentary minds, and that all the powers you possess are a development of their elementary attributes. Now psychology, as well as chemistry,

knows no large or small, no animals or men, no yesterday or to-morrow, but only the constant laws of mind and matter. As one of your naturalists has already pointed out, you have discovered certain laws or principles of your own inner life, and that is absolutely the only measure or knowledge you possess to lay upon the life of any creature. As your chemistry applies perfectly to the meteorite from unknown stars and to the mud upon the sea bottom, so what you know of your own mind will apply perfectly to the motives and impulses that govern any conscious action. To speak of animal psychology, therefore, seems upon the face of it as unmeaning a proposition as to talk of animal gravitation.

At least so it seems to the Rabbit, who has seen many men trying to find him in the snow by following his back trail, and going farther away from him at every step. Your animal psychology proceeds upon the assumption that law is an arbitrary and variable affair; that it changes not only its gait but all its fundamental principles when it chances to run upon two legs. In a word, you are running a back trail to Descartes and his queer beast-machine, and you will never find the Rabbit until you turn and run the other way, with those few naturalists who are now trying to understand the animal as he is in his own skin and in his own brier patch, and not in the traps and cages in which you frighten the

wits out of him before you conclude that he has no wits. And this leads us directly to apply our cheerful philosophy to the queer subject and amazing results of animal experimentation.

There is another modern college professor who has been watching caged monkeys, performing a variety of experiments upon animals shut up in cages, with wire springs and trap-doors and other such unnatural devices. From his observations and experiments he announces positively that the animals do not think; that "transferred associations" — that is, as it were, side-jumps of consciousness, as if your nervous system were made of fleas — take care of the animal automatically. He has no reason, no will, and therefore no more psychology than a spring-gun or one of the twitch-ups that your boys sometimes set for the Rabbit in his own brier patch.

Here is another back track that you are running eagerly; for all such experiments miss the whole question at issue. The point is not whether animals think habitually and are governed by thought, but whether or not they are capable of thinking. If you were to prepare an elaborate system of experiments upon some unknown tribe of men from the Antarctic, you would probably arrive at the fact, which you already well know, that men in the mass are generally thoughtless; that they are largely governed by habits, appetites, passions,

prejudices, and traditions; and that there is little free will among them. Some of your own biologists, like Haeckel, claim that there is no free will at all; and some of your exceptionally thoughtful men often remark that true thinking is the rarest thing found among men, though they have brains evidently organized for thoughtful purposes. If thought be rare among men, it will naturally be much more so among animals, whose lives are much simpler than your own. That animals sometimes think is more than probable, as the Rabbit has shown in another meditation. But they are not governed by thought, except in unusual circumstances; and any course of experiments to prove the fact is as superfluous as the misguided efforts of certain ornithologists, whom the Rabbit watches with increasing wonder. They will collect, for instance, from each species of birds fifty or sixty nests of eggs, destroying thousands of lives and much beauty, in order to prove that the eggs of the same species differ slightly in size and color, — an utterly insignificant fact, since there are no two leaves alike in the whole forest, and one that every child and rabbit knew perfectly well before the atrocious collecting began.

Again the Rabbit ventures to suggest that these experiments themselves are of a kind to prove nothing, except perhaps your psychologists' lack of humor. Traps and cages and spring-doors and

experiments are all so utterly foreign to the animal's daily life that to draw a rational conclusion from their actions under such circumstances has about as much value as to judge men and women in a stock panic, or when they are shut up in a burning building. If the Rabbit could catch a Chinaman, and fasten him in a devil-wagon, and fix the sparker and pull the lever and send him off whizzing, and then watch his actions, he would conclude, after the manner of your psychologists, that men are governed by the peculiar form of reflex action known to you as hysteria and to us as the March madness. Yet the conditions would be no more confusing to the Chinaman than are those that confront the animal when he is taken from the woods and liberty to be shut up in one of your trap-door inventions.

Against all such experiments the Rabbit simply opposes the recorded facts which point to the exactly opposite conclusion. Over against the monkey-cage stand the records of men like Darwin and Wallace and Garner, the latter of whom spent many years watching wild and tame monkeys; against the caged cats and guinea-pigs stand innumerable observations of the wild animal's intelligence made by your own naturalists; and unless these men are all hopelessly blind or immoral — unless, indeed, your own eyes deceive you in watching your own pets — then the experiments are of

little value in settling the main question at issue. A thousand experiments may prove to a professor's satisfaction that his particular caged animals are governed by blind fright or blind habit; but his deduction that animals cannot think is overthrown by a single fact or observation that points unmistakably to the opposite conclusion.

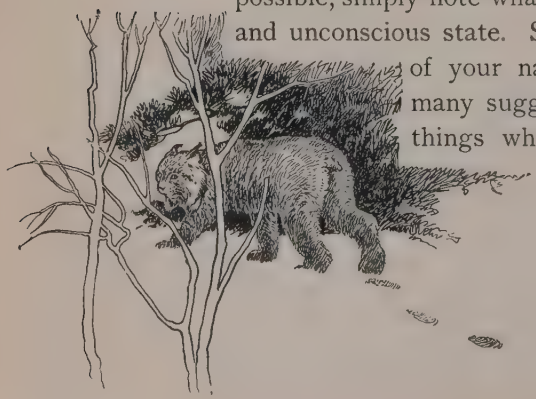
It would seem to the Rabbit that your own boys, who keep pets and who have invariably some interesting facts to claim the attention of your wisest naturalists, should have long ago taught you the value of simply watching animals in as natural a condition as possible, and without blinding yourselves by the psychological delusion of automatic impulses. There is a Danish scientist, for instance, who is just now conducting a series of experiments to establish certain facts of animal life entirely independent of their psychology. To test the observation of one of your naturalists, he has confined various members of the snipe family, and has broken their legs and otherwise wounded them, and has then watched them pulling out their own feathers and using them as bandages to stop the bleeding; a barbarous kind of experiment at best, and it will only prove — what the Rabbit well knows — that, like men, the animals vary widely among themselves; that some think and reason in a rudimentary way, while the majority lose their heads and are helpless in the face of a new situation.

While numerous experiments of this kind may add enormously to your scant knowledge of animal life, it remains true that the mental quality of animals will never be determined by experimentation. A man whom you should experiment upon, to determine his peculiar mental quality or genius, would be as hopelessly unnatural as a man who has a hard iron poked into the back of his neck and a gleam of white light shot into his eyes, and is told to look pleasant while his picture is being taken. An animal in a cage probably knows nothing of experiments, but he does know that you are watching him; and that suggests a bit of natural history which your experimenters have altogether forgotten. The animals when not hungry attend severely to their own business; when they are seeking food they prowl and lie in ambush and watch for anything that may satisfy their hunger. The moment, therefore, any animal finds himself watched he grows uneasy; because in the woods, when an animal finds eyes fixed steadily upon him, he knows that in a moment the look will be followed by the spring and rush of a hunting animal eager for his life. That is why a wild animal can never look steadily into your eyes, and why he slinks away the moment he finds you are watching him.

More than this, far more than you are aware, there is a kind of telepathic communication or understanding among animals, by which they feel

keenly your own mental attitude. Your own dogs should tell you that the animals, without knowing how they know, are conscious of your attitude toward them, whether it be friendly or hostile or merely curious; and except to the friendly attitude, which alone wins them, they never respond by showing their true selves. So while you are watching an animal curiously, with the idea of an experiment in your heads, you unconsciously render the animal unnatural and suspicious; and so long as he remains in this state it is utterly impossible for you to detect his thought or his habitual mental quality. As one of your scientists has pointed out, you are trying by a kind of quantitative analysis to determine the quality of a mind, and you are inevitably foredoomed to failure.

How then shall you study the psychology of an animal? If the Rabbit ventured to answer the question, he would say, Not by experiments, nor by hunting, nor by classification and generalization, which is your present method, but rather by going among them quietly with peace in your heart, which we all understand, and, forgetting yourself and making yourself as inconspicuous as possible, simply note what the animals do in a wild and unconscious state. So you will find, as some of your naturalists are now doing, many suggestive and even startling things which your scientists have

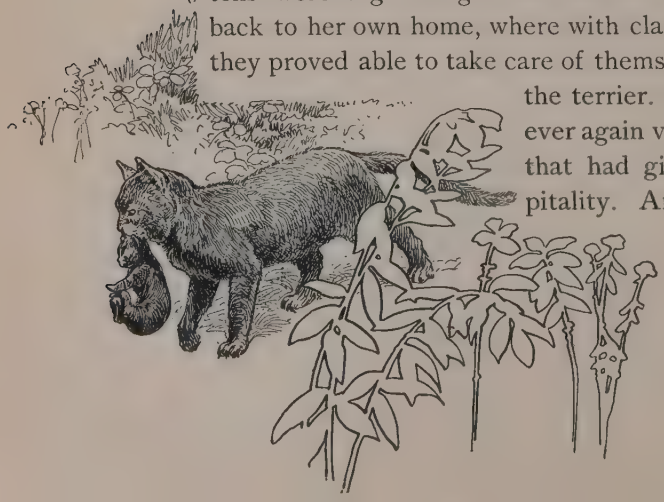


overlooked. Then, by sympathetic interpretation, judge what you see by what goes on in your own head under similar circumstances; for that is the only psychology you know, and that is the only possible way you can rightly judge any living action. When you meet a man whose language you do not understand (and your language, sad to say, is more an instrument of deception than of truth) you judge his thoughts and mental quality partly by his expression, but largely by his action, — precisely as the animal judges you. You are bound, absolutely bound, by your ignorance of any other mental law or psychology to judge animals in the same way.

For instance, since it was the professor's cat that started us on our present trail, one of your naturalists records his experience with a certain old cat whom he shut up with her kittens in a cage with an ingenious trap-door. His object was to determine whether the old cat, after discovering the spring which let her out of the cage, would teach it to her little ones. For he had discovered that mother animals, in a wild and natural state, share what little knowledge or experience they possess with their ignorant offspring. The cat discovered the secret of the trap-door readily enough, being a wise old cat in her way, and used it constantly to let herself out; but instead of teaching it to her kittens she drove them away from it repeatedly, keeping them safe in the cage until

they were large enough to begin to take care of themselves in the world, when she brought them to the trap-door, showed them the way out, and never entered the cage again. And your naturalist holds, as a strong probability in view of all her actions, that this old cat preferred to keep her kittens in the cage, where they were perfectly safe from dogs and enemies, while she foraged for herself with a mind at ease.

Again, a colonel of engineers in your army records his observation of a cat that had a litter of four kittens in a house where there was also a vigorous and inquisitive bull-terrier. The old cat could take care of herself perfectly well, and while she was present she could also take care of her family; but whenever she went away for food the terrier invariably hunted up the kittens and made trouble by his rough playing. One day she took the kittens and carried them all to a neighbor's house, where there was no dog. She visited them there and fed them for several weeks, but lived meanwhile with her own mistress. When the kittens were big enough the mother led them all back to her own home, where with claws and teeth they proved able to take care of themselves against the terrier. Nor did she ever again visit the house that had given her hospitality. And the officer



ventures to assert that, though cats are unusually stupid animals, this particular cat must have had a thought in her head to care for her little ones with intelligence as well as instinct.

The Rabbit ventures no opinion as to the facts of these two observations, which he takes almost at random from the large number that have found their way into his storehouse. He has himself seen enough reasonable things among animals to regard such records without prejudice, and he sees no reason why he should question either the honesty or the eyesight of the observers. The point is this, that your field naturalist and your officer here are probably much nearer the truth, and are certainly more scientific in their method, when they judge an animal's thought and mental quality sympathetically, by what goes on in their own heads, than are the experimental psychologists who regard the rudimentary minds of the animals as being under a radically different law from their own. For the moment you regard yourself as a superior being, entirely apart from the animal and the question at issue, you have thrown away the only possible criterion by which you can judge the animal's action.

There is among you an advanced psychology of self-consciousness, by which you first reason and then analyze your successive mental states in forming a judgment; that is, you first reason, and then

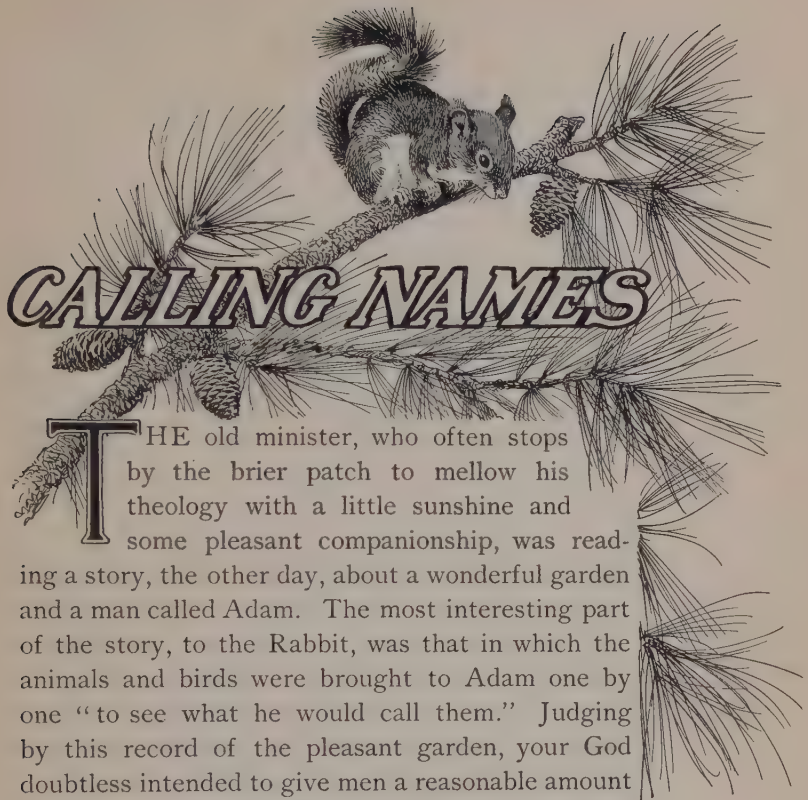
you reason about your reason. And this, in rabbit language, is simply hiding under a cabbage-leaf and watching yourself go by, — which is not so ridiculous as it appears, for your Galileo had first to put himself in imagination outside the world before he could see it move, and your Kant outside of his own mind before he could watch its operation. However difficult and complex this process appears on the surface, it nevertheless bears the same relation to elemental thinking that the higher mathematics bear to simple addition. The principles in both the latter are precisely the same, notwithstanding the fact that every boy can add two and two, while only a rare man in a million can by the same process calculate an eclipse. That the animals reason in adapting means to an end is shown by the Rabbit in another meditation; but whether or not they ever analyze their own minds is another brier patch, into which the Rabbit does not now care to enter. As a mere suggestion he simply points out the fact, which you have doubtless often observed, that animals and birds frequently dream, and that they have also excellent memories. Therefore when your dog wakes up suddenly in the midst of a glorious yelping chase after the cat, and finds himself not chasing the cat at all, but stretched comfortably by the kitchen fire, he must compare wonderingly his past and present states of consciousness. In a

word, he is face to face with his own ego; and that is the beginning of all true psychology.

Just now, however, the Rabbit is content to emphasize the simple fact that the principles governing your mind and his are essentially the same, and that whatever little psychology you know of yourself must serve you in interpreting our simple actions. The naturalists who accept this obvious fact seem to be getting nearer and nearer to the truth of animal life. As one Darwin remarked — and he was unconsciously repeating the wisdom of the Indians — "The more one lives with an animal the more he is inclined to attribute to thought and reason, and the less to thoughtless instinct." On the other hand, those of your psychologists and naturalists who see only blind instinct in the woods, and who perform experiments with caged animals to determine their mental quality, seem to the Rabbit to be giving tongue merrily on a cold back trail, and getting farther away from the animal at every jump.

There is, however, an idealistic view of the universe, with which a thoughtful rabbit has some sympathy, by which you look out into space and see across the whole creation the back of your own head. Perhaps your experimental psychologists have a profound reason in all that they do. By running the back trail far enough they hope presently to get sufficiently distant from a rabbit's tail to meet him face to face.

CALLING NAMES



CALLING NAMES

THE old minister, who often stops by the brier patch to mellow his theology with a little sunshine and some pleasant companionship, was reading a story, the other day, about a wonderful garden and a man called Adam. The most interesting part of the story, to the Rabbit, was that in which the animals and birds were brought to Adam one by one "to see what he would call them." Judging by this record of the pleasant garden, your God doubtless intended to give men a reasonable amount of happiness, for it is one of the oldest and simplest pleasures in the world to give your own names to things.

The moment you name an object you invest it at once with a kind of personality that it did not

have before. Your little girl's doll and your boy's rocking-horse are different creatures after they are suitably christened, no longer wood and stone and false hair, but beings that in some small way respond to the child's own emotions. Even the great mountain that towers between you and the sunset, and the lake that you discover hidden deep in the heart of the wilderness, are more akin to you after you have named them. Nature is everywhere reflecting your own personality and calling on you to recognize it with a name. The gods and nymphs and fairies, keeping watch over the mountains and streams and even the little flowers of the world, are but symbols of that personality which primitive peoples found striving to express itself everywhere in nature.

When you bring your little child to a new animal her first question is, What is his name? And that is only another way of asking, What is his secret, what is his personality? For among all primitive peoples — so the Rabbit Archeologius has told me — when you have discovered the name of any child or animal or object you have some power over it. Thus your ancient Hebrews refused to utter the name of their God, or even to write it, lest hostile tribes might learn it and so have access to the power which the Hebrews claimed for their exclusive possession. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee," was the way they expressed

it in their sacred literature; but so well did they guard the secret of that name that to this day, with all the research of your scholars, you do not know what it was. You call it Jehovah or Yarveh; but that is only a crude guess, which is probably very wide of the real thing. Among Celtic tribes, even to the present day, you must not ask the name of a child. If you are sufficiently trusted, it will be told you; but a stranger may not ask it. And deep within your own souls there is a certain resentment against the stranger who suddenly asks you, What is your name? Among the Eskimos — so the great Northern hare tells me — the name-spirit is the most powerful of the three spirits that keep watch over every man. It gives him his power and his personality. So this first question of a little child in the face of a new animal will lead you, if you but follow it, into one of the most fascinating and mysterious realms of your unknown ancestors.

The Indians still cherish this simple pleasure which your God furnished to Adam in such large measure. They look with suspicion or ridicule upon your uncouth and meaningless names, and call each bird and animal and flower from some characteristic trait that appeals directly to the Indian's own sense of humor or fitness. Even their children minister in this way to their pleasure; for every child is named by some quality or circumstance that marks him as an individual among many kindred but

different people. Civilized men, on the other hand, whose civilization seems to abolish all simple and natural pleasures and to substitute artificial and doubtful joys, have long since lost all sense of the deep meaning and significance of calling names. Your children, with all their individuality, must now bear the common name of their father, — and that 's queer too, because the Rabbit has noticed that the mother is generally a much superior person, and that the father's name were sometimes better forgotten than remembered.

As for naming the animals for yourselves, you have long since lost even the memory of Adam's pleasure, though your children still remember it regretfully. A child, if you let him alone, would naturally call a rabbit Light Foot, or Little Big Ears, or Eyes That Shine in the Ferns, as the Indian children do; but you thoughtlessly repeat *rabbit*, *rabbit*, which means nothing to you, when you come to think of it; and you even give Little Big Ears a very uncouth Latin name to show that you have read the skin-and-bones classification of your scientists. And some of the latter, I am told, travel to Timbuctoo or Alaska in order to find a peculiarity of some rat's tooth or caribou's horn, for no other purpose than to add their own insignificant names to the already uncouth nomenclature with which you have burdened the harmless animals. So that you cannot any longer speak of

the caribou, or The Wanderer, but must stop to explain whether you mean the *Rangifer Willie Jonesei* or the plain *Rangifer Perkins.*

That also is queer to the Rabbit, who had supposed that science was far above all personal vanity. It must be, therefore, that your scientist of the rat's tooth or the caribou's horn goes back to Adam for his authority, as our theological rabbits used to do in the Middle Ages.

The Arabs, I am told, have a somewhat different way of remembering Adam. When they want to hear a man's character in a nutshell they disregard his meaningless name and that of his father, and ask simply, What is his adjective, that is, what is the one word that best describes the man, stripped of all his artificialities and insincerities, and regardless of the world's opinion?

Unconsciously, perhaps, while avoiding such a disturbing question in your own business and social relations, you have adopted it as an easy and excellent plan for classifying the animals. The individuality that we once possessed in our native Indian names has all been swept away. What is his adjective? you ask, not of individuals, but of whole classes of animals that differ from one another as widely as Adam's two children.

In answer to that question whole races of animals now stand in your literature as types or illustrations of a single quality. Thus the whole rabbit

clan stands for fear, the lions for courage, the owls for wisdom, the geese for imbecility; and so you say or write, "timid as a rabbit, brave as a lion, wise as an owl, silly as a goose, quick as a cat, crazy as a loon," and many other such things which only show to a rabbit how, following your usual human custom, you have taken other men's thoughtless opinions without any thought of your own.

Now a rabbit who adopted such an unthinking classification, who considered an owl's nightly gibberish to be the words of wisdom, or regarded a stupid cat, that never knows what next to do after her first blind rush, as the symbol of celerity, would have as his only philosophy the fear of death; and even so, he would hardly survive a week in the safest kind of a brier patch. Knowing the animals as he does, the Rabbit ventures to suggest that, if you but watched us for yourselves, you might find how far astray your literary men and naturalists have gone in their adjectives, and might find also the primitive Adam's pleasure in calling names that appealed to your own eyes and ears, instead of repeating the mistakes of your civilized and unobservant forbears.

To begin with the animals that live in your own barn-yard, the Rabbit notes with interest that the adjectives you have given them express largely the results of too intimate association with yourselves. "Dirty as a pig," you say; but how can

a poor pig represent anything but dirt in the debasing conditions under which you force him to live? You shut him up in a muddy pen, into which all the refuse from the stable is thrown, and call him a dirty beast because he cannot escape into the fields and orchards, where he naturally wants to be. From his birth you stuff him with all kinds of swill, and then call him greedy because he cannot forage for acorns and fruit and vegetables, which he undoubtedly prefers. Naturally the pig is a cleanly animal, and will even now, notwithstanding his long degradation at your hands, keep himself and his house much cleaner than either your dogs or your cows, if you turn him loose out of your filthy pen and give him half a chance. In a state of nature, and free from your abnormal fattening process, he has no greed, but roams about the fields and woods, thin, alert, active, eating only the good things which tempt his appetite, just as all clean wild creatures do. What stumps the Rabbit's philosophy is that you should develop the dirt and greed and abnormal fatness of a naturally clean animal in preparing him for your own tables, to eat him.

So with the sheep, who in your speech is condensed foolishness, and with the goose, who is stupidity. You have taken away from these creatures all their native wit and cunning, made them wretched creatures of helpless dependence and

abnormal stupidity, and your adjectives now represent only the result of too long contact with your superior selves. Some of your hunters have followed the wild sheep and have learned, with immense surprise, that he is not foolish at all, but wary and keen and splendidly intelligent to take care of himself; while the wild goose, whom you have tamed and spoiled till he gabbles as senselessly as the mob at an evening reception — to which the Rabbit listened, one night, through the open window of Mr. MacGreggor's best room — is in reality, with the possible exception of the crow, the most intelligent and remarkable of all the feathered folk. Goose to man, he is in many respects your superior in cunning; and with all your knowledge, and aided by your dogs and guns, you cannot escape his sentinels nor come near enough to harm him. Only as you make use of other geese, teaching them treachery and then using them as decoys, can you pit your wit with any success against that of the bird whom you call silly and stupid.

Concerning the wild animals your speech and literature seem, to the Rabbit, to be full of ready-made misconceptions. You say your soldiers are "brave as lions," which is a sad travesty unless they are a blatant and boastful breed; for the lion's courage consists in roaring in a terrible voice to frighten timid animals, which he wants to

paralyze by fear before he ventures to attack them. The moment a lion is faced boldly by any creature he stops his roaring and slinks away, like the coward he is in his heart; and he will rarely face even an angry buck unless his mate is there to help him.

On the other hand you say "timid as a rabbit," as if the silent little fellow of the long ears did not have far more real courage in his heart than the great coward whom you have made the symbol of bravery, perhaps because of his much roaring. Now a rabbit would naturally have no fair show against one of your cats, who is bigger than he is and has terrible teeth and claws; yet any ordinary rabbit will drive an ordinary cat out of his brier patch, and will scare the life out of her so completely that she seldom stops running till she gets back into her own dooryard. As the cat charges, the watchful rabbit leaps over her and kicks down with his hind foot, giving pussy a whack on the head that takes all the fight out of her, and away she goes in a blind, headlong rush for the nearest tree or fence. Only last week a cat came sneaking and prowling after a bird's nest in a tree near the brier patch, and a young buck rabbit stole up behind, as she watched the nest, and gave her two good thumps as he jumped over her. She must be running yet, judging by the way she flew out of the brier patch without ever stopping to look for what had hit her.

More than this, the Rabbit has seen an old mother rabbit conquer a dog five times her own weight in a fair fight. The dog — a meddlesome brute, as all your dogs are, having forgotten at your hands to keep still and mind their own affairs, as the wild animals do — rushed yelping at a litter of young rabbits which had wandered away from the burrow. He killed one, though he was not hungry, and had gripped another, when the old mother rabbit flew out of the bushes and jumped over the enemy and gave him a resounding thump on his meddlesome head. He rushed at her savagely, again and again, only to find her up in the air kicking down with all the strength of her long legs at his head and back; and he fled at last, with the little rabbit flying over him for a last good kick as he rushed yelping through the bushes.

Far be it from the Rabbit to pose as a model of courage, as some of your hunters, after killing a harmless buck, call attention to their manly virtues. What you call Providence must surely have some humor, for the moment a man or a rabbit sets up a superior claim Providence unites with his fellows in calling him down to a lower seat at the table. The Rabbit remembers the weasel, and how young rabbits when pursued lie down passively and wait to be killed; but that is something which you men cannot understand, unless you remember how paralyzed some of you are at the

sight of sudden danger — a rattlesnake, perhaps — which seems to freeze you in your tracks and to take away all feeling but that of powerless fascination. So do weasels affect the young rabbits, for some unknown reason. The Rabbit is no hero, having the fear of humorous Providence in his eyes; but he cannot help wondering what cat or lion would drive off a huge mastiff, five times its own size; and his philosophy finds no reason why you should choose, instead of the rabbit, the large bullying things, like the lion and eagle, for your national symbols of courage, when in their hearts they are both cowards that can hardly be driven into anything like fair fight. 'T is a mad world you men have made of a reasonable creation; but perhaps most of your national wars and conquests would themselves explain why it is that you place symbols of bullying, screaming cowardice over your fighting hosts.

As with the lion and rabbit, so with most of the other wild animals; the adjectives you give them are rarely such as you would use, did you but follow your own thoughts instead of the senseless custom of unknown predecessors, — which is, when you come to think of it, the real ruling force among men. Now and then you hit it right, as when you say, "sly as a fox"; but when you give the adjective *cross* to the bear, and *rapacious* to the wolf, and *crazy* to the loon,

and *blind* to the bat, the Rabbit wonders in what jungle of ignorance you searched out your misconceptions. Possibly your literary men, who are chiefly responsible for the adjectives, find them in their study, where your poets find the strange idea that Nature is cruel, and where naturalists wander back to Descartes' musty volumes to discover that animals do not think. For the bear, far from being ugly, is a droll and whimsical fellow who loves to be alone. At heart he is more timid than any young rabbit, and instead of rushing savagely upon your children to devour them, as in your nursery tales, will slip away out of their path and will not even stop to watch them, as the harmless deer love to do. A rabbit will prowl about your sleeping camp half the night, and will try to frighten you, because you are big, by his thumping challenge; but at the first faint sound or smell of a man Bruin the Bear rushes away for the thickest cover he can find, and you are fortunate indeed if you catch even a glimpse of him.

So also with the wolf. As the Rabbit has pointed out, in another meditation, the wolves kill generally only what is absolutely necessary for food, and, unlike your dogs, when they are not hungry they let all other little creatures alone to live their life in their own way. While brave enough at heart, the wolf, like all other wild animals, has a strange timidity in the presence of

physically upright creatures; but, unlike the rest, he has a doglike interest in man, perhaps also a feeling of friendship or kinship. He will often follow men at a distance whenever he finds them lost in the woods, not to attack, but only to watch with intense curiosity what they are doing. Except when driven crazy by hunger he never molests men; and even so, when starving and irresponsible, it is astonishing in your own great country, where the great timber-wolves were most abundant, how very few cases there are in which you can point to a human being injured by the wolf-pack. The Indians, who have watched the wolf for a thousand years, regard him as a little brother; and the Rabbit has heard fables of Mowgli and of Romulus and Remus, which seem nearer to the truth of things than the atrocious story of Red Riding Hood, with which you frighten your children.

That also is queer to the Rabbit; for why should you ever frighten a child, especially by misrepresentations? and why, to teach moral lessons, should you make use of an untruth? The wild animal is essentially a friendly but timid creature, and if you but let your child alone, his natural friendliness and timidity will win us in a way utterly unknown to your head-seeking hunters and your specimen-seeking scientists, neither of whom can understand the true mind of an animal, nor name him with anything more than a show of superficial truth.

So the Rabbit ventures timidly upon a plea for a new science of names, which shall have some measure of truth and appropriateness. Your child naturally remembers his heritage from Adam, and loves to give names of his own to the animals and even to his comrades. There was a boy who used to go past the brier patch and who was invariably called Butts-up by his fellows, because in making his dog-house he nailed all his shingles butt-ends up. That dog-house was a weird sight, even to a rabbit, and it caught every drop of rain and led it in to fall on the shivering brute beneath. Curiously enough this name, given by some true young son of Adam, was more appropriate to all the boy's usual actions than the historic name his mother called him by. There is also a certain little girl who trips past the brier patch, and whenever she asks for the name of a thing her father shakes his head and lets her name it herself. So she calls the owl *Oo-hoo*, and the young sparrows *Peep-peeps*, and the monkey *Make-a-face*, and the water *Lodle-odle*, and the waves *Tikoowuk*, because that is what the waves are always saying to the rocks. In a few more years, besides seeing and thinking for herself, she will have a vocabulary not only more interesting, but nearer to the truth of nature than all the jargon of your scientists and the adjectives of your literary men.

BRIER PATCH
PHILOSOPHY

BRIER PATCH PHILOSOPHY

THE Rabbit hopes that by this time you are quite convinced that an animal sometimes thinks in his own head, and so you will not scoff at the idea of our possessing a philosophy. If you still have any lingering doubts, it may be well to read the records of your famous biologists, who announce confidently, as a new discovery, not only that the animal thinks, but that it would be practically impossible for him not to think so long as there is at work in his head a certain part of the brain, corresponding precisely to that part of the human brain which does all its thinking.

To a rabbit the only surprising thing is that it should have taken these keen men so long to discover so obvious a fact, and in such a roundabout way. It is as if the Rabbit should triumphantly

announce the discovery that the brier patch has thorns, not because he had frequently sat down upon them, but because he found the roots of the bullbriers to be anatomically like those of the blackberry vines. The untutored Indians have known for centuries that animals think, not because they examined their dead brains, but because they saw the living animals do many things, such as building dams and houses, correcting their cubs, and hiding their trail from an enemy, which the Indians themselves could not possibly do without thinking. Evidently, in this case, your biologists argue from theory, and your Indians from facts and comparisons; the one from dead matter, and the other from life itself; and the Rabbit is wondering which of these you regard as more scientific. But that is another brier patch. It is enough for the Rabbit that your simplest Indian and your greatest naturalists agree with him, and so he takes it for granted in this meditation that you can good-naturedly admit the possibility of his thinking.

Out of thought grows philosophy; and here again, as in discussions of reason and religion, one must generally listen, not to facts and thoughts and inspiring ideas, but rather to names and doctrines and party shibboleths. It is foolish to get tangled up in a bullbrier thicket when one's thoughts are all of orchards and sweet apples; so let us agree, if we can, upon what philosophy really is.

In the Book of Silence it is written, "The world swims in an ocean of thought," and there is much truth therein, which cannot, however, be reached by the kind of anatomy upon which your biologists mostly depend. Thought seems to pervade the soul or the self; that is what you men find by looking into your own heads. Thought also pervades the universe; that is what the flowers and the stars and all the laws tell you, if you but listen to them. When you think one thought you find yourself; when you think two thoughts you find the universe. And these two thoughts, of yourself and the universe, constitute philosophy.

For philosophy is the effort to understand yourself in relation to the universe, without taking either too seriously. You are in essence a thought, as Hume and Berkeley and certain other of your own philosophers have told you; the universe is another thought; and it is therefore foolish for you to curse the weather, or to die of love, or to make the family miserable because of your indigestion, or in any other wise to bat your inconsequent head, which is but the house of your thought, against the universe, which is the perishable house of some one's else imperishable thought, — just as if the shuck of a cocoanut were of any great consequence.

Now the animal, like the man, is more or less conscious of himself; he is also acutely conscious of the universe; but unlike the man, who puzzles

over the husks and shells of things, the animal strips them off as quickly as possible to find the kernel of joy that is hidden under every rough exterior. So his philosophy, that is, his little thought of himself and the universe, is more cheerful than yours, because he has probably a truer estimate of values. He likes the kernel better than the husk, silence better than noise, peace more than excitement, and fellowship infinitely better than competition. So the birds tell you, if you rise in the glad time of day and listen to their chorus, that each one is glad to live and that he finds the morning woods an exquisite universe; they have therefore a philosophy. So the Rabbit may teach even men a lesson; he lives in a brier patch, exposed to the elements, waylaid by snares, and hunted day and night by cats, dogs, foxes, owls, and men; yet he takes life gladly or with serenity, according to the weather, finds the elements kindly, loves to play with his fellows in the moonlight, and spite of tribulation finds the world so good a place that our theological rabbits, unlike their human brethren, have never thought it worth while to consider the question as to whether or not this is the best possible universe that might have been created. The Rabbit has a philosophy, you see, and whether he calls it by that name or not is of no consequence whatever.

By some it will be said that the animal's kindly and genial view of the world — our *Weltanschauung*,

"Each one is glad to live and finds the morning
woods an exquisite universe"

as my cousin, the German hare, calls it — is due to our ignorance and lack of thinking; that we know not what trouble or death means, neither do we understand the complex problems of consciousness. That is only one of the many queer generalizations made by naturalists in their study, with some stuffed skins or caged monkeys before them, from which they derived their philosophy. Such a naturalist should live in a rabbit's skin, in the midst of a brier patch, for a little while, to enlarge his experience. Ticks and snares and weasels and drowned families and broken legs and yelping dogs and gunshot wounds and empty stomachs in winter are some trouble; but, in distinction from men, we make as little of such things as possible in view of our unnumbered mercies; in which philosophy some also of your own thinkers will find satisfaction. Numerous sects have arisen among men from time to time, who maintain, with some show of human reason, that most of your alleged troubles have no foundation outside your own imagination. The Rabbit even overheard a very pompous and healthy-looking woman rebuking her little boy, the other day, because he persisted in saying that he had the stomach-ache after eating green apples. It was not a pain, but only an idea of evil he had in his stomach, she said, and proceeded serenely amidst his groanings to give him some kind of a mental emetic.

That's queer too; for the Rabbit remembers eating some Paris green that had fallen from the potato-vines upon a carrot, and if your human ideas of evil can produce such convulsions as shook his internal workings, it is surprising that you do not load your guns with them.

Whatever the contents of the boy's stomach, the Rabbit is grateful for his own pains; otherwise he might have continued eating Paris green until he killed himself. For pain, when you look at it philosophically, is neither idea nor evil nor trouble, but a very good and practical friend, without whom no man or animal would ever learn to take care of himself in the world. There is your dog, out yonder, limping along on three legs. He has injured his foot with a thorn or a piece of glass, and instantly Nature puts a little pain there as a watchman. It tells him to hold up his foot, to keep it away from dirt and bruising, to lap it with his tongue in order to cleanse it and reduce the inflammation. So pain indirectly heals him, for without pain he would still put his wounded foot to the ground, filling it with dirt, bruising and inflaming it more and more, till it dropped off, or by its own decay poisoned and killed its owner.

So, probably, with most of your own pains, which are Nature's kindly warnings, telling you to mend your ways and live more naturally and happily. The trouble is that you

seem to have no philosophy of pain. When the animal finds pain growing severe he heeds the warning, goes quietly aside, lies down, and relaxes utterly; and presently Nature sends him off into a doze in which his pain is forgotten, and then she begins her healing work. But when a man finds himself in pain he usually raises a row and the doctor; he is afraid of it, thinking it an enemy rather than a friend coming to tell him of his mistakes in living; and he multiplies it in his imagination, as the fearful Hebrew spies multiplied the size and number of the Anakim. So at the approach of pain you usually stiffen and fight, and suffer far more than necessary, instead of lying down and relaxing, giving yourself with all confidence into Nature's hands till she puts you away in a comfortable doze and begins to heal you, — just as she intended to do when she sent her pain as a friendly messenger.

As for other kinds of alleged trouble, your naturalists are of course right in saying that we do not understand death in the brier patch, any more than a great writer understood death in the desert; but the Rabbit has searched in vain, and given the meeting signal all night long, for a mate that never answered again; and he has found a young rabbit cold and answerless in the twilight, whom he saw hopping gladly along the furrows at dawn. So much, at least, the Rabbit knows about

death, that he knows not what it is, and that it is different from life. And this, if you think about it, is a good beginning of wisdom. Besides, the Rabbit notices that your own superior knowledge of death seems to be founded on the assumption that death, like pain, is a trouble and an enemy. It is hardly necessary to point out to you that this is a pure assumption on your part, without any reasonable or sufficient foundation. Viewed philosophically, without personal bias or prejudice, it is much more probable that death is only another of Nature's kindly messengers, telling you, what the spring sun tells the old acorn, that it is time now to drop your old habits and give the life within you a chance to express itself freely, which it can never do until it breaks out and away from the husk of material things that you thoughtlessly call life.

The Rabbit will consider the subject of animal death in another meditation. Just now it is enough for our purpose to remind you, as one of your own naturalists has suggested, that all animals have a strange consciousness of a journey from which they will not return to their accustomed haunts; and since they love the pleasant haunts they put off the journey as long as possible. When the time comes, if they are not hurried swiftly away in the meantime, they go quietly to a good hiding-place and lie down to sleep, still thinking to put off the

journey. What follows the sleep we do not know. Our first sleep is perhaps as great a mystery as the last. To sleep at all, to lose consciousness of the glad bright world in a maze of darkness and dreams, would seem a terrible thing if we had not grown accustomed to it when we were too young to think. So with this last sleep whose long silence puzzles us. We expect to awaken, and Nature has never yet deceived us. Therefore we sleep at last, as we have lived, gladly and without anxiety.

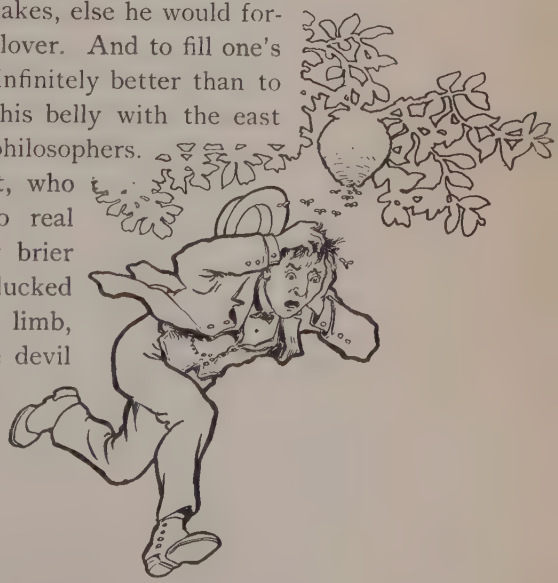
Surely, therefore, it is not altogether our ignorance which brightens our outlook on the world. Ignorance is rather allied to darkness than to light; and I fancy that a perfect wisdom, which perfectly understood this amazing brier patch of mine and that stupendous world of yours, would be quite cheerful about both. Very wise men, I know, though tolerant and kindly, are generally not over-cheerful, but seem burdened by the weight of their knowledge. That is because their knowledge, after all, is but little, — a drop out of the brook, a leaf out of the clover patch, as they well know. Yet the drop is like the brook, and the leaf is like the clover patch; and if one could only understand the drop perfectly, he would understand the world, which, I have heard an astronomer say, is just a big drop in a much bigger space. Probably the bowed shoulders of your wise men is the result, therefore, of being

burdened with the mystery of a water-drop or a clover-leaf. Did they know more, they would probably find the burden of knowledge lighter, perhaps even self-supporting. It is only a god who knows all, or a rabbit who knows himself, who is not troubled by his knowledge, and who can therefore afford to be perfectly cheerful.

What causes the strange perversion of human thinking by which you look steadfastly at the husk of things and grow sad or bitter, rather than find the sweet kernel and be happy, is an unending puzzle to the rabbit mind. An animal thinks when he must, and then only just enough to take care of himself; after which he goes quietly back to the pleasant ways of making himself in harmony with his universe. A man, on the other hand, can hardly live a week in harmony with his own wife and children, to say nothing of the universe. He is more apt to curse the weather, which interferes with his horse-race, than to feel the wondrous beauty of the dance of water-drops on the lake or the rain of sunlight on the wet leaves. His harmony, at best, is a kind of "rag time," like a squirrel's chatter, of which he soon tires, rather than a deep pervading sense of music which rests one like a sunset, or like a giant pine upon a mountain top. He tries to do too much and live too little; to scramble desperately after riches without, while neglecting the wealth within. And when he does

sit down for a moment to think, he is like a tired man who puts whisky in his empty stomach; he grows hilarious, like an Irishman, or foolish, like a Yankee, or theological, like a Scotchman, or melancholy and quotes Heine, like a German. He gets mixed up in his thoughts, not being used to them, and runs wild like a March hare.

In consequence, one man's philosophy makes the world a dream-castle, or a sad blundering mistake, according to whether he follows the subjective idealism of a Fichte or the terrible pessimism of a Schopenhauer. Now while the Rabbit's philosophy can understand the world as pervaded by thought, it would never do for him to consider it a dream — which is thought run wild, without intelligence and will to guide it — else he would thoughtlessly sit down on a bramble-bush, whose points are not dreamlike; neither would it do for the Rabbit to emphasize the world's mistakes, else he would forget to be grateful for the clover. And to fill one's belly with sweet clover is infinitely better than to follow Ephraim and "fill his belly with the east wind," like Job's pseudo philosophers. Besides, I saw an idealist, who holds that matter has no real existence, go through my brier patch one day, and he ducked his head to avoid a low limb, and jumped away as if the devil



were after him when he ran into a hornet's nest, — just as if these things did have some objective reality outside his consciousness.

So in the matter of religion, which is the alpha and omega of philosophy, — a thought of yourself and the universe faintly illumined by a light whose source you may not see, but which makes a man willing to go on cheerfully into the darkness, when necessary, instead of sitting down to bemoan the fact that he has no more light. Here you have even more strangely perverted an excellent thing — at least so it seems to the Rabbit — by living on husks, running after a dogma when you might have a god, or by thinking too much of what you do not know, rather than living up nobly to what you do know without a peradventure. There is one man near the brier patch whose religious thinking makes the pleasant universe a vale of tears, and who sings something about this world being a wilderness of woe, — which is, of course, not true at all; for that same man laughs at a joke, and likes a good Sunday dinner and a smoke; and if, happily, he ever goes to the wilderness, he finds no woe at all, but only peace and health and good fishing. What he calls his sad world and his uncomfortable Puritan conscience is, from the viewpoint of true philosophy, only a little matter of his own indigestion.

Another man's religious philosophy makes life to consist, not of a glad going forward to better

things, which is the distilled essence of all faith, but rather of a desperate dodging of some queer and purely imaginary devil, or a heartbreaking chase to escape hell-fire, — which is probably something like a conflagration that once swept over the brier patch, but which nevertheless puzzles the Rabbit sadly to understand. For he has never read any treatise, even of theology, which resolves your human soul into carbon and hydrogen and other inflammable materials; and he cannot imagine how fire could possibly affect thought and memory and will and love and personality, which are, I am told, the indestructible elements of your human souls.

So with other religious men, whose misdirected thinking makes a god with a terrible disposition, surrounding himself with a peppery cloud of dogma which makes you sneeze before you get used to it, and insisting that you join in a mediæval confession, or sign thirty-nine more or less impossible articles, before he will have anything to do with you. And when you sit down to think philosophically about the confession and the articles you are rather glad of such a god's exclusiveness. All these are but husks, and the Rabbit will try to find the kernel of all religious philosophy in another meditation. Just now it is perhaps enough to suggest that, so far as you have learned anything about your God in the pleasant world and in the love of men, he seems a kindly Being, whose

perfect thoughtfulness shows itself at least in this, that he has not left you altogether unguided and alone to blunder your way through an incomprehensible universe. The Rabbit watched an astronomer recently, and noticed how he let his telescope sweep over vast empty spaces to rest on every star. In your religious philosophy of God and the human soul you seem to have reversed the process, lingering on the blank spaces and forgetting the points of light.

In the matter of men's business the Rabbit is even more sorely puzzled at the husks you cherish than when he examines your perverted philosophy of religion. Inside the nutshell the kernel of business is this: you found, long ago, that it was not well for a man to be his own farmer and blacksmith and storekeeper and banker and teacher to his children, but that you could do better work and be more individual by each one doing the thing he liked best and simply exchanging your products. So business, in its true philosophy, is a combination of all scholars and artists and artisans into a league of mutual helpfulness. By your thinking and practice, however, you seem to have made it over into an insane kind of competition, a struggle of life and death, in which the sweet kernel is forgotten and the reward is simply more husks. And all the while the fact stares you in the face that the good earth easily produces enough for you all, with some pleasant labor on your part

and more pleasant thought and recreation. When a rabbit finds a clover field he is grateful not only for his own little corner, which ministers to his necessities, but also for the abundance in which others may be satisfied. He searches his philosophy in vain for any reason that should make him strive to own the whole field, which he cannot possess or use, while other rabbits are driven off to dry bark and the yearnings of an empty stomach.

So, in the times when he is not busy enjoying his life or trying to keep it, the Rabbit must conclude that his philosophy, which takes the world as it is and makes the best of it cheerfully, is not only more comfortable but is perhaps nearer the truth than the perverted human kind. Perhaps "'t is not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door; but 't is enough, 't will serve." Best of all, the Rabbit's philosophy, though simple enough, is his own, like Touchstone's wife. A young rabbit wisely follows and learns from his mother, as all other young wild animals do; but once he has grown up and found his own brier patch, he tries to understand his world for himself, unlike the vast majority of men, who take their philosophy without thinking from very ancient tradition or very modern society.

To sum up our philosophy, the Rabbit's thought for himself is this: that his life is a splendid thing, the very best thing he knows, with endless capacity

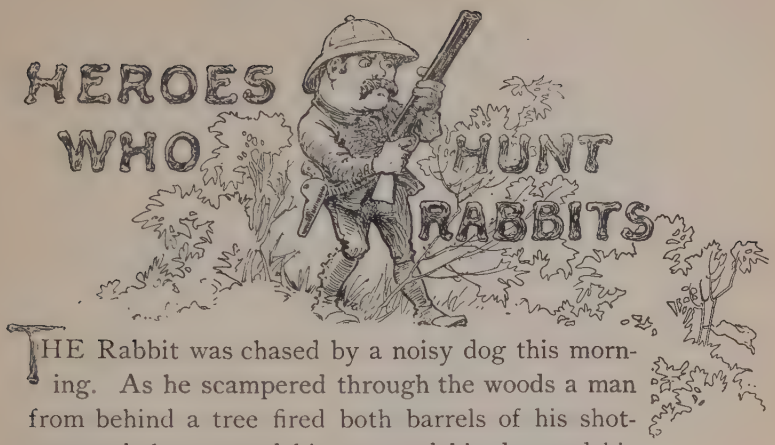
for simple enjoyments. He has eyes, and the world swims in glorious light and color. He has a nose, and every flower and tree and blade of grass offers its fragrance. He has ears, and when he stops to listen, whether to the brook or the leaves, to the wind or the forest, or to the great tense silence of the night, harmonies are moving to set his nerves tingling to the melody of the world. He has feelings, deeper and more subtle than all these, and near by are his mate and little ones and his own fellows to satisfy him. His life has some trouble, to be sure; but only by contrast can he understand the joy that is his; it has also mystery, like your own, but a life without mystery would be an empty seed-pod whose kernel had been taken away. It is the invisible content that interests us. An unknown path is pleasantest, which reveals the home only when you have doubled the last turn.

As for the Rabbit's world, the brier patch and the clover field, these also are good, so long as the door of the brier patch stands open to another, and so long as the Rabbit is content with what he needs of good clover, and has no mind to corner the whole field while other rabbits go hungry, which is your inexplicable and troublesome custom. The world has cats and owls, to be sure; but Ch'tok the Silent One made them, and they must live their own life in their own way. With a sensitive ear and a nimble foot they can never

trouble a rabbit's philosophy. Outside your own skin, wherein peace lives, life is a splendid game of even chances. Now, while you men like a game better than anything else, you seldom realize that it is the game itself, not the winning or losing, that is interesting. Even in your games, as in your philosophy and life, you seem to have missed the real thing to fasten eagerly upon shadows. So in your play you take unfair advantages, and gamble and howl in great crowds, with all your overexcited imaginations fastened upon one tumultuous moment when some one shall say *five-four* or *four-five*, while the play itself passes unseen before your blinded eyes. If the Rabbit wanted that kind of a game or a life, he would nibble a hemp top to get a taste of hasheesh, which would produce exactly the same sensations. For the prize is not the game, but is only a shining bubble that breaks when you grasp it. Winning and losing are but trivial and momentary things, soon forgotten, while the great game goes on forever. Besides, we all have a dim consciousness at times that the game here is only begun. The other half will be finished in another field; and if there are any prizes or other vanities to be distributed, the business will be attended to by some one else, who has no prejudices.

So the Rabbit, like all philosophers who have found the truth, is glad of the game. The winning or losing is of no consequence beside the good playing.

HEROES WHO HUNT RABBITS

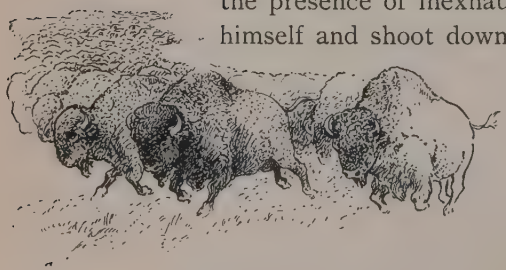


THE Rabbit was chased by a noisy dog this morning. As he scampered through the woods a man from behind a tree fired both barrels of his shotgun, and then cursed his gun and his dog and his shells and his powder because he did not shoot straight. To escape all these afflictions the Rabbit doubled his trail and scrambled under a friendly stone heap.

Now far be it from me to judge a clover patch by its weeds and thistles, or to condemn a rational universe because sometimes things run amuck through it. Doubtless the dog was amusing himself in his own way by his crazy yelping; probably the man also was living his own life, such as it was, in trying to destroy some other life; and the Rabbit was certainly following life and good rather than death and evil — which, according to your prophets, are the only two alternatives in the world

— when he tried to keep his thinking in his own familiar skin, where he likes to have it. But now that the man and the dog have gone away to kill somebody else, and nature has grown exquisitely still, and the Rabbit is back in his brier patch at peace with the world once more, the time seems propitious for a quiet meditation upon the manly sport of hunting.

Said a gentle English poet, "What a beautiful morning, what a heavenly day! Let us go out and kill something"; and the mild sarcasm was not lost even on a serious people who rank sport next to religion and politics. Here also, in the land of free game and mighty hunters, there are some faint glimmerings of a reasonable philosophy. At least the Rabbit notes this curious bit of inconsistency, that whereas your sportsmen regret their lost opportunities, and speak enviously of their country as having so recently been a hunters' paradise, they are nevertheless ready with unanimity and Calvinesque thoroughness to consign to Purgatory or endless torment the happy Nimrods who once reveled gloriously in the midst of it. So when they read the *Oregon Trail* — a very pretty and interesting picture of the alleged paradise — they are curiously divided between the desire for illimitable hunting and indignation at the man who, even in the presence of inexhaustible game, could conceal himself and shoot down a modest dozen of buffalo



bulls, for no better reasons, apparently, than that there were plenty of them, and the weather was fine and he was amusing himself, and perhaps, after your curious hunting philosophy, that he was also developing his manly virtues.

To understand any situation two things seem to be necessary, experience and philosophy; the one gathers the facts of life, the other arranges and harmonizes them; and when men follow after false gods in the world it is because they lack either the experience or the philosophy which together make wisdom. The Rabbit has had some personal experience, having occasionally been hunted by hungry and therefore savage animals, and also by men who, being well-fed, seemed rather more savage than their four-legged and hungry brethren. Judged by this experience alone, hunting would be an atrocious business, without a shred of reason, or anything else except starvation, to give it standing. But the hunted animal tells only half the story; your hunters also have an experience to tell, and so the Rabbit has followed them gladly, whooping on the excited dogs, or following the trail alone through the still white woods. Moreover, he has nibbled at that accumulated human experience which records itself in your big hunting books. With this added experience hunting is not so bad, as the English hare says. Indeed the Rabbit must confess frankly that he likes both a good hunt and

a good hunting story, and finds some warrant in this part of his experience to justify them.

Viewed for a moment dispassionately, as a matter of purely natural history, all animals must eat to live; and life to the animal, as to the man, is a game of reasonably even chances between eating and being eaten. All his life long the animal plays the game, and if you watch a fox playing ahead of the dogs, you may conclude that the element of danger probably adds considerable to the animal's joy of living. Peace and rest are comprehensible only after strife and labor. So long, therefore, as a man hunts and fishes for his dinner and observes a reasonable morality in the matter of fair play and moderation, no animal could object to his hunting and fishing. If men must eat fish to live, that is no reason in the brier patch why your fishermen should all turn anchorites, put on a hair shirt, and recite the penitential psalms while waiting for a bite. It may be even well for them to listen to the brook's song and consider the cowslips, and so get some real fun out of their trout fishing.

As for hunting, it seems on the whole rather better, to the Rabbit, for you to cut down a wild bird in swift flight, or to stalk a keen, shy animal that fears and flees from you, than it is to bring up a calf or a chicken to feed from your hand, and then, when he learns to trust you, to knock him

on the head or wring his neck because you happen to have an appetite for his tender flesh. And if your hunters get a bit of wholesome excitement or recreation out of killing the wild grouse and the deer, it is not for a rabbit to question the pure ethical standards of their amusement. We are all queer, differing only in the particular quality of our queernesses. To be consistent we should all turn vegetarians, and then be inconsistently unhappy over the unanswerable problem of how far the beans and carrots enjoy their life, and whether or not a kind Providence did not intend that they too should have a right to live and reproduce their own kind, after the first commandment to that effect, — which question, of course, makes one wonder whether Providence remembered also men and rabbits. A purely spiritual existence, you see, is the only thing that can possibly satisfy a reasonable being who asks questions.

Meanwhile it is well to remember our limitations and be charitable. The Rabbit has sometimes noticed in your yards an animal or a baby fastened to a ring, which slides back and forth on a wire stretched between two posts. Just so, a man's present liberty seems to consist largely in sliding back and forth on a line, one end of which is held by reason, and the other by carnal appetite. Until the ring is unslipped and you are really free the Rabbit is not quite sure about the philosophy

of those who patronize the butcher and condemn all hunting.

It is not, therefore, your hunting to which the Rabbit objects, but rather the methods of your hunters, and especially the queer philosophy which first indulges a weakness and is a little cowardly, and then preaches valiantly of the courage and manly virtue of the indulgence, as your mighty Nimrods are wont to do. For, leaving out the unnatural and unaccountable creatures who catch trout as long as they will bite and who shoot as long as game is stirring, the true experience of your hunters is something like this: They enjoy the woods and the chase, as they enjoy any other new and uncertain game. When they kill a little thing with a big gun they find, deep down in their hearts, a certain sense of shame, or unfitness, or perhaps just a lack of harmony with themselves and the quiet woods. No man can hear the last shriek of a wounded rabbit, or wring the neck of a wing-broken bird, or meet the reproach in the beautiful soft eyes of a stricken deer, and feel any great swelling of manly pride in his achievement. Indeed, if men but listened to their own hearts, there would be no need of preachers, but only of poets, in the world, — as your greatest teacher pointed out to you in his parables.

Precisely because they have had this unrecorded experience so often, your hunters almost invariably

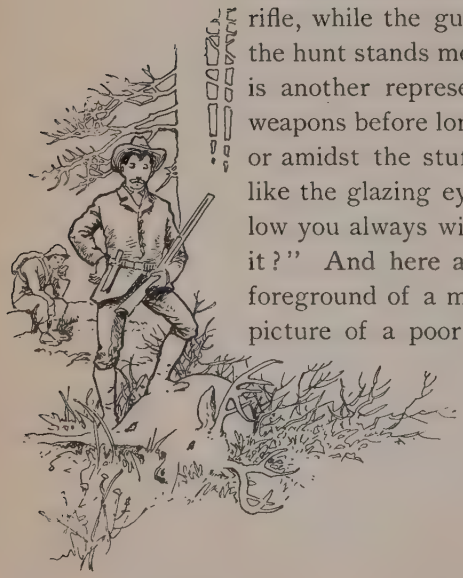
grow tender-hearted as they grow older, and dislike more and more the idea of killing, while enjoying the chase as much as ever. Such, I am told, is your reasonable experience; but now comes the queer part of the story. When hunting comes to be written in your books of sport, then this general and most illuminating experience is put aside as something of too little — or, is it too much? — account, and your mighty hunters tell proudly of their dogs and killing, and regret their lost chances, and they invariably preach to you a bit about the beauty of nature, and eke about the joy and the hardihood and the heroism and the other manly qualities that are developed by hunting.

So we are reminded of a brave Lord Mayor of London who went out on horseback with a great company to hunt hares. Suddenly an attendant pointed to a bush and cried out, "The hare, Milord, the hare!" And the mayor drew his sword, and set his teeth, and cried in a loud voice, "Let him come on! I thank my God I fear him not." For hunting always makes valiant men, we are told.

If the Rabbit were himself disposed to preach, he might suggest at this point that, in the brier patch, they give a different name to that particular quality which is developed from killing timid and harmless creatures. He has met many men in the wilderness, and cannot help noticing that those who seem

to understand the big woods best invariably go into them quietly and without fear, having found out long ago that there is nothing whatever to be afraid of; while those who seek not only heads and hides but also courage and manly virtue in their hunting seem to need applause, or whisky, or newspaper mention, or guides, or some other unnatural and unusual stimulus. He notices also that the bravest men invariably take courage for granted, as they take a quiet smoke, and never preach about courage and manly virtue to their neighbors. But that is another brier patch. We were speaking of experience, and the Rabbit, to increase this first element of wisdom, has been examining your big hunting books, looking first at the pictures, as simple minds always do.

Here, for instance, is a representative hunter standing over the body of a deer, leaning with studied, Natty-Bumpo carelessness, on his terrible rifle, while the guide who planned and carried out the hunt stands modestly in the background. Here is another representative man, standing with his weapons before long rows of slaughtered innocents, or amidst the stuffed heads of his victims, which, like the glazing eyes of a dying deer, seem to follow you always with a question, "Why did you do it?" And here again is the noble hunter in the foreground of a most illuminating picture. It is a picture of a poor little bear cub in the top of a



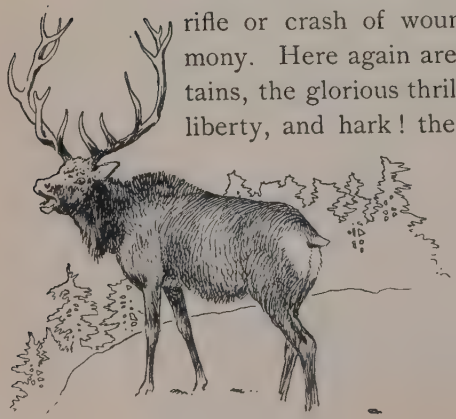
tree, and to appreciate its heroic details you must look down with the cub's frightened eyes and see the pack of savage clamoring dogs and a band of jubilant hunters on horseback, armed with terrible repeating rifles. Hitherto the cub's world has been a gentle and peaceable place, and his mother was always near to guide him. Now all is changed in an instant; the world is full of noise and terror, the strong mother is gone, shot and torn and worried to death by dogs and hunters; and the little cub must face it all alone for the first time. At best he could not harm a rabbit, and now he is paralyzed with fear, knowing nothing but the horrible clamor below him and the thumping of his own heart against his ribs. Finding no mercy on earth, he scrambles toward heaven. He climbs to the highest twig that will bear his weight and stands there shivering.

A wolf, now, unless he were hungry, would pass by that little thing indifferently; but not so the heroic hunter. He sends a man up the tree to take the cub's picture. According to rabbit reason that ought to be a ransom, a picture for a life; for the picture is valuable to the man, and the life is all that is valuable to the cub; but these manly hunters take the picture and the life too. They shoot the cub and add his little skin to their big collection, made up, by the way, from the killing of mother bears and their helpless cubs, which, I am told, are

generally exempt in the philosophy and practice of plain hunters who are not heroic. And presently, after examining scores of such pictures, we are assured that hunting is a fine, manly sport and develops the hardy virtues of humanity.

It hardly needs a rabbit's philosophy to discover that there is surely something wrong in these illustrations, which are taken at random from some of your best-known hunting books. If, indeed, there be any manly virtue in your hunting, then these unfortunate pictures do it unseemly violence. They suggest a mild-mannered and inoffensive little man who joins a lodge, and presently appears in a heroic procession with a plumed hat, glittering sword, and gorgeously beribboned clothes to startle his neighbors, who thought they knew all about him. So the Rabbit, leaving these vain pictures — which are humorous or tragic, according to whether you follow a two- or a four-legged philosophy — turns to the text of your hunting books in his quest of understanding.

At first glance these word-pictures are decidedly better. Here are the joys of camp, the rush of the wind and the river, the exquisite peace of the woods at dawn and at twilight, when no roar of rifle or crash of wounded deer disturbs the harmony. Here again are wide plains and lofty mountains, the glorious thrill of the frosty morning and liberty, and hark! the soul-stirring challenge of a



bull-elk, ringing like a bugle-call through the big woods and echoing back from the mountains.

The Rabbit can appreciate all that, for he also has heard it, and has tingled all over at the sounds and good smells in the air. Now for a real picture, a picture to make you glad that you too are alive and bubbling over with the joy of mere living. A twig cracks, a thicket opens with the soft rustle of silken curtains, a noble elk steps proudly forth and stands with raised head and flashing eyes, like a perfect statue into which some friendly god, in love with his beautiful work, has suddenly poured a torrent of foaming life. A moment only he lets you admire the still picture; then he leaps out, as if on tempered steel springs, throws back his massive antlers, and sends out his wild bugle-call to his rival on the other mountain, telling him to stop his vain blethering to cows and yearlings, and come down and prove his boasted strength and the force of his desire for a pretty brown mate, who is waiting and watching out yonder in the shadows of the still woods.

Glorious pictures, truly, worth coming out for to see; but look! like a weasel on a rabbit track a man skulks into the scene, hiding behind a tree with a murderous repeating rifle. There is a frightful roar, the smell of villainous saltpeter; an expanding bullet tears a great hole through the warm heart of the unconscious buck, and all you

have left of your picture is a writhing, kicking mass of flesh — useless even for food at this season — pouring out the red torrent of its life over the spotless snow.

Such a crude ending to one of Nature's masterpieces; as if you beheld a perfect and priceless picture of Millet, and to show your barbarous appreciation dashed an ugly daub of red paint across the whole canvas!

Such is the unexpected and violent ending to most of your pretty word-pictures of hunting, as recorded in your books and magazine articles. A rabbit is running and dodging through the woods, all his faculties alert to escape and even to play with the pack of savage dogs that clamor stupidly on his trail, when a charge of shot from some unknown source behind a tree sends him rolling end over end to his last resting.

That in itself seems somewhat unfair in a universe of law, and discordant in a world of possible harmony; but what stumps the Rabbit's philosophy altogether is the virtuous preaching that so often follows. Your representative hunters, after one reassuring look in the glass, take pains to tell you that you also ought to go hunting, that it is a noble sport and develops your courage and hardihood and all your manly virtues. Many of them, after killing mother bears with young, or collecting numerous heads of game unfit to eat, or killing

more deer and ducks than they can use, exhort all honest men to spare and protect the diminishing wild animals; and all grow virtuously impressive in assuring your timorous souls, who bide at home or venture into the fearsome woods without weapons, that if hunting is to be maintained at its present noble elevation, the deer or the rabbit "must be given a fair chance for his life."

Now the Rabbit's philosophy has this peculiarity, that it leads him, in every question at issue, to look at the matter first from the other fellow's viewpoint; and he can recommend this cheerfully as an excellent basis for even a two-legged philosophy. So in order to understand your hunters and find the psychological basis of their peculiar virtues, he has put himself carefully in their place. In imagination he has grown enormously in stature till he overtops you like a son of Anak and you are become as grasshoppers in his sight. He arms himself with a colossal rapid-fire cannon, unchains a pack of ferocious mastiffs, about the size of elephants, and goes out into a quiet village, on a sleepy Sunday afternoon, to stir up and shoot a few of its small inhabitants.

After bagging a dozen harmless citizens and a few mothers and one big chief-magistrate the Rabbit comes back to his cozy brier patch, eats a good dinner, and then sits down with a full stomach and an empty mind to repeat the above virtuous sentiment of your own hunters. "Hunting," he

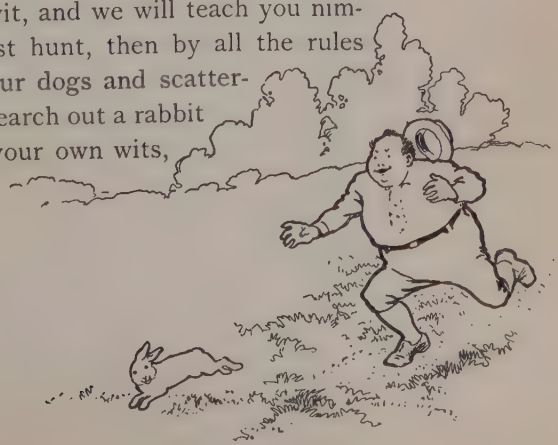
meditates, "is a noble pastime. It develops the hardihood and heroism and all the desirable virtues of rabbits. But softly, softly, *noblesse oblige!* In order to keep it a noble, rabbity recreation, let us always give the little two-legged harmless creature of the village a fair chance for his life."

Then quickly, like a scared woodchuck popping into his burrow, the Rabbit, even as he is speaking such noble sentiments, dives down into his own head and examines it carefully in order to find what your psychologists call the exact content of consciousness, — which, of course, must be in a hunter's head when he writes such things after his hunting. To his surprise the Rabbit finds in his head, as the chief content of consciousness, not a solitary thought nor a shadow of noble feeling, but pure vanity and thoughtlessness. These, therefore, must be the psychological foundation of the manly virtues, if your hunters have not deceived themselves in their interesting records. And so, to increase them, the Rabbit ventures a few suggestions.

There was a queer little man of gentle spirit — one of your philosophers, I am told — that used frequently to go through the brier patch, and his fellows called him Thoreau. I never saw him with a gun; but he discoursed briefly and to the point, one day, on the subject of hunting. "Snipe and woodcock furnish excellent sport," he said; "but I maintain it would be nobler game to go out and shoot oneself."

As for giving the little cottontail "a fair chance for his life," that is excellent philosophy. Such consideration is all that any wild animal asks; but, of course, that is impossible so long as you are skillful shots and employ dogs and repeating guns and perfect cartridges, each containing three or four hundred pellets of lead to be turned loose upon one small rabbit. If you consulted a cottontail as to a fair chance in such hunting, he would probably imitate a certain mild little man, with no skill in weapons, who was challenged by a big fire-eater to fight a duel. He accepted promptly, naming as his conditions that they should fight with bare fists at ten paces. The Rabbit might make good shift to care for himself against dog, or man, or gun; but the three together are like what I have heard of German diplomacy, which asks all and gives nothing, and is moreover brutal in the asking.

All prejudice aside, and looking at the matter from the viewpoint of a rational philosophy, this would seem to the Rabbit to be a reasonably even chance: Your wits are from constant practice much greater than ours, while our legs are more nimble than yours for the same reason. Do you therefore teach us wit, and we will teach you nimbleness. If you must hunt, then by all the rules of fair play leave your dogs and scatter-guns at home. Go search out a rabbit where he hides, by your own wits,



and chase him with your own legs. That would mean excellent sport for you and the rabbit. It would reduce the surplus weight of your mighty hunters admirably; it would produce in you alertness, wind, staying-power, nimble legs, superb chest development, — all the physical virtues. In addition you men would not be perpetually troubled, as you are now, in making game-laws, which, I am told, are regulations to save the game from the many, in order that the few may kill it. For if you give us any reasonable fair play, you could all hunt six days in the week, twelve months in the year, and the game, like the poor, would be always with you.

To sum up your experience in hunting, the most illuminating part of it seems to be carefully suppressed, and as for the rest, the Rabbit finds little in your pictures or records or common practices, as seen through unprejudiced eyes, to justify the heroic claims or the virtuous preaching of the tribes of Nimrod. Whether you hunt large or small game is of no consequence. The deer are more harmless and helpless than the rabbits, since they are more easily seen and have no holes of refuge; and the bears, which you strangely imagine to be ferocious and destructive, are in reality shy and timid creatures, which feed largely on vegetable and insect food, letting the game alone except in rare instances, and whose only thought

toward man is to slip away from him as speedily and noiselessly as possible. When you lay aside your own hostility, as you occasionally do in your big parks, even the bears gradually overcome their shyness, stealing out of their coverts to feed on the crumbs that fall from your tables; and they will even take food from your little child's hand without harming her. The idea of developing courage and manly virtue from chasing such creatures up a tree with a savage pack of dogs and men, and shooting them when they are absolutely helpless, looks somewhat queer in the brier patch, where animals are wont to meet on a more equitable footing. There is certainly nothing in your experience to justify such a claim, and so the Rabbit must perforce turn to your philosophy for enlightenment.

A typical editorial in your chief sporting journal, to which the Rabbit recently listened, sums up the alleged reasons for hunting and the alleged virtues which it develops. To get quickly, in rabbit fashion, at the heart of the carrot, this editorial stripped of all its husks contains this one reason for hunting, that it is a primitive natural instinct. And since "nature provides the laws, the standards of morality, which are the true guides of all mankind," it is wise to follow the instinct, and a foolish or sentimental fad to oppose hunting. The two virtues which hunting develops are courage and a knowledge of nature. Such, in brief, is the philosophy of hunting.

To a rabbit, who imbibes his knowledge of hunters, as your Anthony Trollope learned Latin, mainly through the pores of his skin, this philosophy is like a Shanghai rumor or a Chefoo dispatch; it has hardly the shadow of truth in it. Most, if not all, the instincts of men have come down to you from the animals. Now there is not in the whole animal kingdom a single hunting animal, that is, an animal that naturally or instinctively goes out, as you do, and hunts for sport or pleasure. An animal hunts only for food, and only when he is hungry. When his hunger is satisfied he ceases to hunt, and naturally and instinctively lets all other animals severely alone.

There are but few exceptions to this rule. A wolf will sometimes chivy a flock of sheep and kill several of them; but that is because the foolish, crowding animals confuse the wolf, who is used to different game, and rouse a desire to kill that is not naturally present; for the great wolves of the North cease the chase instantly when one deer or caribou out of the herd is pulled down. A weasel kills for the blood; but the Rabbit has heard of one Lottridge, a scientist, who asked why this was so, and by a series of experiments proved that a weasel's stomach is generally lined with tapeworms, producing a continual craving for blood. Some weasels he found that would kill only one chicken or rabbit, no matter

how many others were present; and upon killing these weasels he found invariably that the stomach was healthy and without the worms that probably lead other weasels to killing everything in sight. Some of your cats also hunt when not in need of food; but that is simply because you men have fed and spoiled them, and have so perverted their natural instincts that no rational conclusion can any longer be drawn from their actions. In a state of nature all the felines, from the cat to the tiger, kill only one animal out of a herd, and they return to their kill day after day, until it is all eaten up, before they hunt again. Did they hunt and kill as you do, there would hardly be a living animal on earth at the end of a single season. The wild animal has no instinct whatever to kill indiscriminately or to hunt for sport; he simply seeks his natural food; and the only instinct you can possibly derive from him, in this respect, is to go out when you are hungry, and take the first thing that satisfies your hunger, and then let all other creatures alone to live their own life in their own way.

It is pointing to a secondary cause to say that you receive the instinct from your savage ancestors; but even here the alleged reason seems, to a rabbit mind, to be without foundation. Your savage ancestors imitated the animals and hunted for food to sustain life, not for pleasure or sport.

The Indians' fall hunt was to obtain meat and supplies for the winter; and until the white man came among them, with his business and sport, no such hunting as you indulge in was known or practiced. More than this, in proportion as your primitive ancestors rose above savagery and became shepherds and agriculturists, hunting decreased steadily. The first primitive man who gathered a herd of animals about him with the thought that they were his friends and helpers disguised, and that they were far more useful to him alive than dead, made a discovery — indeed a very great discovery — that lifted him instantly above the low level of the hunter. Legitimate hunting, since there was no more need for food, perished with that discovery, except as the shepherd defended his fields and flocks against the inroads of savage beasts, — a good kind of hunting undoubtedly, from the man's standpoint, but for which you have unfortunately now no excuse or reason whatever.

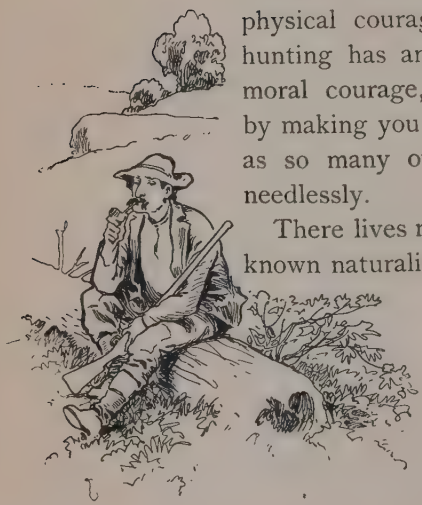
Even if your hunting were, as you claim, an instinct from your primitive ancestors, you are not therefore justified in following it as such. The Rabbit might mention several other so-called savage instincts still remaining in you, which, instead of following openly, you conceal in the dark as much as possible, and mention only in your treatises on the improvement of morals. But the

Rabbit, speaking from the animal's standpoint, must again point out to you that hunting as a sport is not found among the animals or savages, and so you cannot claim it as an inheritance. If it were a primitive instinct, as your literary hunters and your sporting journals declare, then of course you would find it widespread throughout the race. As a matter of fact, only a very small minority of you men have what you call a sporting instinct. Women, I am told, are more numerous than men; they have also stronger instincts. If hunting were an instinct, then you would naturally expect to find it strongest in women, especially as the female animal generally has to hunt more than the male in order to support herself and her little ones. But your women have no instinct to hunt; indeed, with a few rare exceptions, they seem to have a strong feeling or instinct against it, on account of the needless cruelty and suffering involved.

As for the alleged manly character that hunting produces, the Rabbit has not heard that your government, when it wants good men for any purpose, either for war or peace, searches among the hunting set exclusively. The Rabbit has heard rumors of the fox-hunting parson in England, and did not know that to the flock he was an example of manly virtues. And in your own New England, which produced in the past a noble breed of men, I have

even heard it mentioned, as a matter of common knowledge, that hunters were generally considered to be a shiftless and lazy lot. Each village used to have one or two, and they were generally placed near to the outcasts. Moreover the Rabbit notices a curious thing among you even now. Your sportsmen praise the joy and the fine manly quality of your hunting; but when one of your number loves the joy and the fine manly qualities so much that he takes to hunting all the time, trying doubtless to have as much virtue as possible, you turn at once and rend him, calling him vile names and jailing him at last as a butcher and pot-hunter.

The Rabbit has no prejudices, not even against the dog and the shot-gun, and he thinks your estimate of the pot-hunter, and your New England fathers' estimate of all hunters, to be a trifle unjust and narrow; but this historic estimate of your own making leads him to speak of the alleged results of hunting upon the manly virtues.



The first of these is courage, that is, a purely physical courage; for it is not even claimed that hunting has any effect upon the higher kind of moral courage, except, perhaps, to decrease it, by making you go against your own better nature, as so many of your hunters do, in taking life needlessly.

There lives near to the brier patch a certain well-known naturalist who has hunted all of your large

wild animals, which are often called dangerous; and the Rabbit has heard him declare with quiet conviction that there is hardly a particle of danger incurred in hunting any wild animal with one of your terrible modern rifles. So far as animals are concerned, it is far more dangerous to cross a city square than to penetrate the Rockies. The grizzly bear was at one time a possible and solitary exception; but now your courageous hunters eliminate all danger by baying the brute with a pack of dogs while they kill him at leisure from a safe distance. And even so, you take guides and helpers with you to make the matter as safe for yourselves as a rabbit drive. Occasionally, but rarely, a wounded animal will charge; but he has no chance whatever against the stream of death-dealing bullets that are turned loose upon him. All wild animals are naturally timid, and avoid man whenever possible; and this naturalist declares, from much experience, that he finds no danger even when he meets them, as he has often done, unarmed and alone. To him it seems not courage, but almost cowardice, to creep upon a harmless animal, like an elk or a moose, and shoot it down without a single chance for its life, — which is all that it has.

The Rabbit has had some experience of his own in this direction. He has often approached a camp of hunters in the woods, and when they were all asleep he has thumped the ground at their heads,

— a startling sound in the still night, especially if you do not know what makes it. From the way these hunters jumped in alarm, though their tent was full of terrible guns, the Rabbit had no great impression of their physical courage; certainly not greater than he has witnessed in a tent full of miners, or scientists, or plain lovers of the woods who, unarmed amid the animals, find nothing whatever to make them afraid. The Rabbit has heard rumors also of a recent frightful war among men, and the most splendid physical courage was displayed, not by the great bear-hunters of the North, but by a gentle race of Japanese farmers and fishermen.

So the Rabbit, who tries to see things as they are, is forced to the conclusion that this claim, that hunting produces courage and the manly virtues, has some boasting and much humbug about it. If the Rabbit were a man, and wanted to develop physical courage, he would take his gun and go hunting dangerous game — horse-thieves and outlaws and burglars and Yaqui Indians and such, who could shoot back — and would leave the so-called dangerous animals for children to work upon.

As for the claim that hunting brings a man close to nature and teaches him many things, that is undoubtedly true; and that is the only claim that has, to a rabbit mind, any truth or reason in it. On the other hand, it would seem that the man

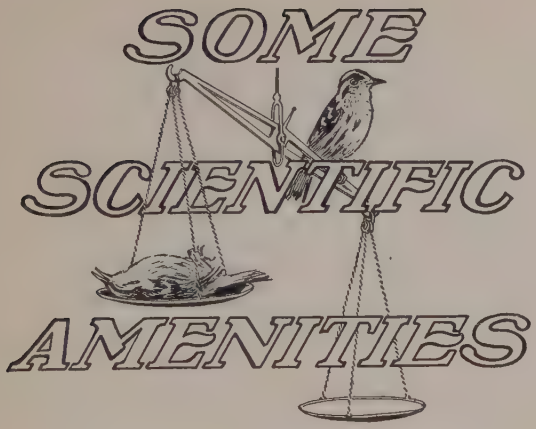
would learn quite as much about nature and animals, and would understand both better, if he went into the woods and left his gun and dog at home; and he is strengthened in his opinion by the fact that your great scientists and naturalists, your discoverers in the realm of nature, were not followers of Esau and Nimrod, but of Agassiz and Gray and Darwin, — gentle men all, and of good courage, and with plenty of the manly virtues that nature made shift to develop without the aid of a pack of dogs and a repeating rifle.

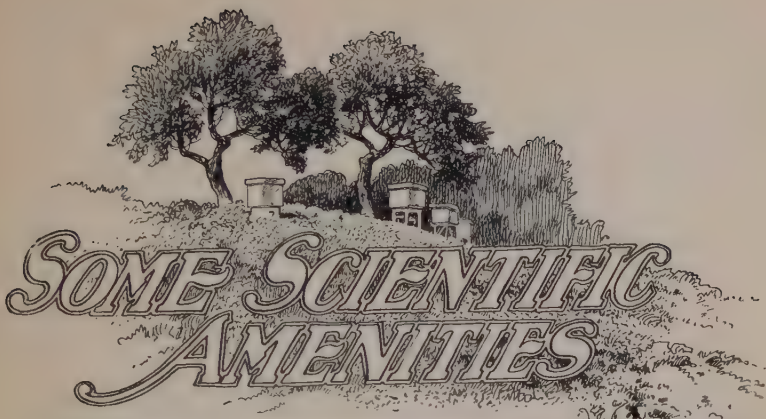
Here then is the heart of the carrot: your hunting is a sport pure and simple, not an instinct or a necessity, but rather one of the things that "the preacher" had in mind when he wrote, "God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." The sport gives many of you pleasure undoubtedly, and a better and more wholesome pleasure than many of your other inventions in the same line. On the other hand, it gives many others of you — perhaps a majority of you — pain and uneasiness and misgivings of heart, because of the feeling that your sport is needlessly cruel, and inflicts too much suffering; and because it brings to the weaker creatures of your common earth the shadow of fear and death, where with your superior strength and wisdom you might bring joy and life instead.

To a rabbit mind it would seem, therefore, that the only question which you can consider with any

show of reasonable philosophy is whether or not your personal pleasure overbalances the pain you give to others. All knowledge is relative; all virtue, even your manly virtue, is but laying aside a lesser for a greater good. The Rabbit has heard with interest that your hunters are gradually turning naturalists; that photographs of animals are replacing stuffed heads in your houses; and that some of you prize a full heart even more than a full game-bag.

SOME SCIENTIFIC AMENITIES





SOME SCIENTIFIC AMENITIES

THE Rabbit was hopping along to the clover field, one night, when he came upon two men lying drunk in the road. Now the Rabbit could get drunk himself if he wanted to; all you have to do is to nibble a hemp top or eat a few fermenting apples; but that is another brier patch. The two men were Germans, and so, instead of becoming quarrelsome or foolish or brutal or theological, after the manner of various other races, one of them was meditating deeply on philosophy, while the other was very melancholy and persisted in quoting from Heine that he did not know what it all meant that he should be so sad. So long as these two men both lay helpless in the road and simply argued about their way home, all went well; but the moment one rose to his unsteady

feet the other promptly twined restraining arms about his legs and pulled him back again.

"I could get home if you let me alone," complained the philosopher.

"You could n't get home, and you could n't stay here without me," said the disciple of Heine.

Then, still lying prone in the road, they argued deeply about this proposition, until the Rabbit grew hungry and left them; but his last view was of one man creeping on hands and knees, while the other hung to his legs, protesting loudly that neither of them could walk or find his way alone.

To the Rabbit, whose natural ways are ways of pleasantness, but who has sometimes been driven out of them into scientific byways and hedges, this whole little comedy seemed very much like your scientific search for truth. The moment one of your scientists gets upon his own feet, to go ahead into the darkness that surrounds us all, other men grab him promptly by the legs to pull him down, and insist that there is no truth or reason in his pushing ahead of the other fellows. Witness Bruno and Galileo and Hahnemann and Jenner and Darwin and the rest, each with a multitude of scientific arms twining around his legs, trying to hold and anchor him as he staggers forward. No scientist, of whom the Rabbit has heard, has ever yet announced a discovery which set him ahead of his fellows without finding himself grabbed by the

legs in an endeavor to pull him back into the crowd out of which he started.

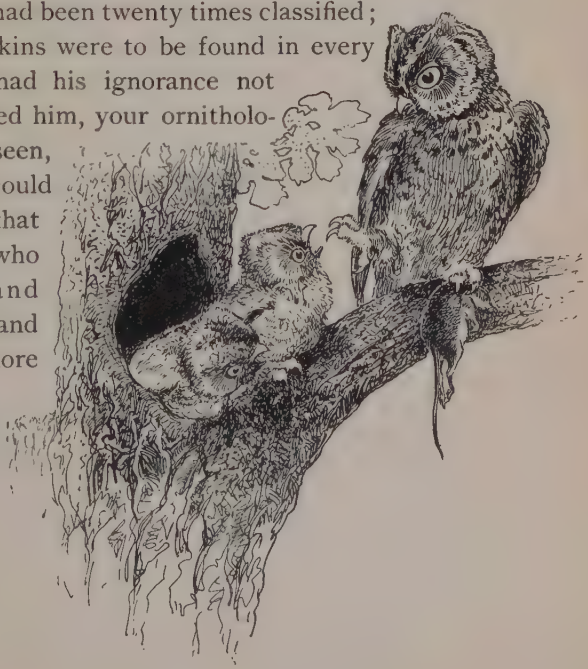
That also seems a peculiar philosophy to be cherished by rational beings, especially when you remember that your scientists assume at times the entire prerogative of the search for truth, and ridicule the controversies of your philosophers and churchmen. Certainly your scientists are searching for truth, but curiously confine themselves to material things, as if there were no difference between a house and a home, and as if the only possible interest in a house was to be found in its cellar; and so, to a rabbit who thinks, they bear the same relation to philosophers that a tailor bears to a teacher. But if, indeed, there be any divine Being in the universe, then any man who finds a grain of truth in any place has drawn one step nearer to his God, who probably thinks truth continually. And it stumps the Rabbit's philosophy to understand why, since you are all seeking truth, you should grab the legs of a man who ventures a step ahead of you into the unknown to see for himself and to tell you what is there.

The Rabbit has been led to meditate on these things of late, because of the row that has been raised among you in regard to animals. Now your human experience with the animals has three distinct stages. The first stage was that of the savage, when a man lived close to the animal,

understanding all his ways sympathetically, finding in him a motive and a thought somewhat like your own, as the Indians, and indeed as all primitive men, invariably do. The second stage was that of the civilized man. You grew far away from the animal, following your tendency to live in crowds; but because you established schools, and in them your children clamored for some knowledge of the little brothers to whom they instinctively felt themselves akin, you began to study the animal superficially, his bones and his skin, and tried to classify by outward tokens all the animals on the face of the whole earth. This was the scientific stage, and is rapidly being completed. The third stage is just in its beginning. It combines the scientific classification of forms with the sympathetic interpretation of a life that refuses persistently to be classified; and it is just here that all the trouble has arisen among you.

Only yesterday a man and a boy came out of the woods from opposite directions and met near the Rabbit's brier patch. It was a glorious morning in springtime, and the man, who was an ornithologist, had taken his gun and gone out to make a collection of the warblers that were swarming northward, where the budding woods and the open streams and the love-songs of their mates were calling them. The boy had been sitting all morning in the top of a pine tree, silent as a crow in

nesting time, watching a family of owls in a neighboring tree, seeking to find out how they lived and thought in their own skins, and how the mother divided the game which she had brought home to her hungry nestlings. The man opened his bag, showing one hundred and sixty-odd warblers, exquisite little creatures, all dead, whose skins would presently be packed away with his dusty collection. And the boy listened with wonder as the man named the birds in his uncouth jargon, while the man listened with half-contemptuous superiority to the boy's eager story of how he had watched the mother owl punish one strenuous little owlet, who insisted on taking more than his share of the game from his timid brother. Yet all these pretty warblers had been twenty times classified; their dead dry skins were to be found in every museum; and had his ignorance not altogether blinded him, your ornithologist must have seen, what any rabbit could have told him, that the small boy, who hid in a tree and tried to understand life, was far more scientific in his methods than the man, who



was interested chiefly in death of birds and the study of their feathers.

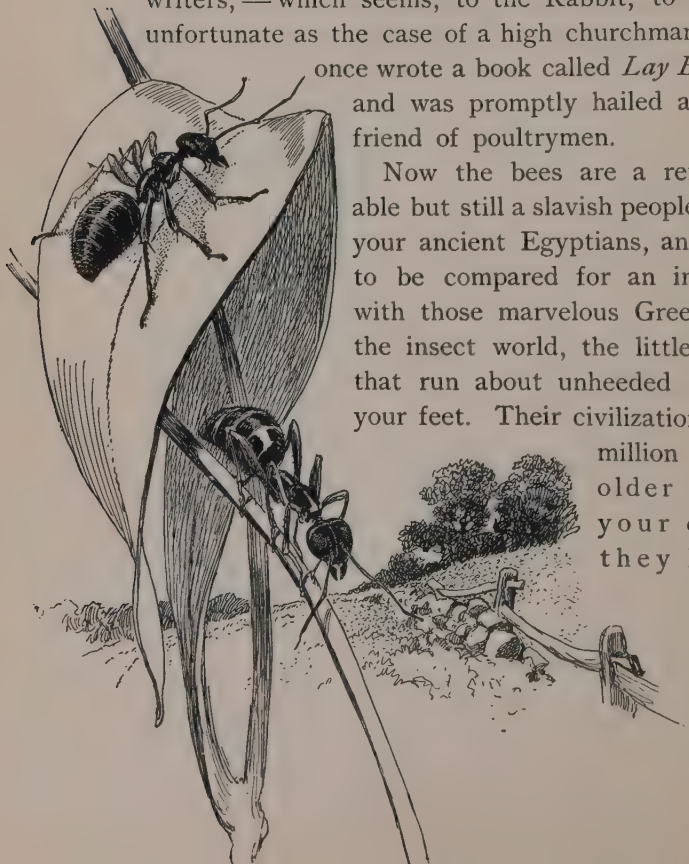
This little scene by the brier patch was characteristic of the whole controversy that has been going on for years among your bird-men. Some of you, while regarding birds with interest, or even with affection, had no patience with the study of ornithology as it has been carried on, with its stupid cabinets of eggs and skins, its identification of species as the one thing to be sought after, and its questionable slaughter of untold innocents in the acquisition of its superficial knowledge. Most of all you rebelled against the ornithological dictum, that one dead bird in the hand was better than a score of live birds that slipped away unnamed by you into the northern wilderness. Shoot and identify is the law of the ornithologist; watch and respect all life is the law of your own heart, a law which grows more and more imperative as you read a multitude of bird-books and find nothing but feathers in them. Some of your observers, knowing the scientific classifications and regarding them as trivial things, went out into the woods to watch and follow the birds, trying simply to understand the life and instincts and the little joys and tragedies that hover over every nest. To their amazement these last observers found everything new. In choosing their mates, in building their homes, in training their young, in their mysterious migrations,

in their loves and animosities, the birds showed a thousand interesting qualities not recorded in the books; and instead of the blind instinct, which was supposed to govern them, you found intelligence, memory, and at times an apparent motive that was comprehensible only as you remembered what you had seen among your own small children. These things also came to be written; whereupon the ornithologists grabbed your new observers by the legs. They had collected and identified and slaughtered their thousands, and you had no business whatever in finding out the more important things which they had overlooked. For naturally, being interested in scientific technicalities, they had seen nothing of the wonderful life that goes on under a bird's feathers, and they had no desire that your new observers, in studying life itself, should incidentally expose their scientific blindness.

In strong contrast with this peculiar method is another, which the Rabbit must take note of in his philosophy. When one lone man rises to his feet and goes forward into the dark, you pull him back; but the moment the crowd rises and moves all together, then your scientists promptly clamber upon what you have expressively named the "band wagon," which is only a specific name for that strange desire for noise and popularity which distinguishes man from all other animals. In plain rabbit talk, it is running down-wind because it is

easier and more comfortable to do so, forgetting the fact that the weasel generally hunts up-wind, so as to catch any foolish rabbits that may be running down carelessly to meet him.

The occasion for this scrap of rabbit philosophy is found in a recent little book, called *The Life of the Bee*, by a modern writer who happens just now to be popular. It is an admirable story, dramatic and fascinating; but unfortunately most of your scientists, running for the band wagon, have hailed it not simply as literature, but as sound scientific doctrine and a sane model for the misguided nature writers, — which seems, to the Rabbit, to be as unfortunate as the case of a high churchman who once wrote a book called *Lay Effort*, and was promptly hailed as the friend of poultrymen.



Now the bees are a remarkable but still a slavish people, like your ancient Egyptians, and not to be compared for an instant with those marvelous Greeks of the insect world, the little ants that run about unheeded under your feet. Their civilization is a million years older than your own; they have

their cities, their farms and orchards, their social orders of slaves, artisans, soldiers, and hereditary rulers; they wage well-ordered battles, make slaves of the captured enemies, keep milch cattle, build bridges, tunnels, and roadways; they nurture their young, attend carefully to their sick and wounded, bury their own dead with every mark of honor, and cast the bodies of their enemies into a careless trench dug by their slaves. Most wonderful of all, to a man, every individual of the swarming city works steadily, not for his own selfish interest, but solely for the benefit of the community of which he is a part, — a rare and beautiful ideal, once dreamed by a prophet, who saw a vision of a marvelous city wherein every man did not seek to outdo his neighbor. He had doubtless seen such a city under his feet, and his vision of the open heavens merely expressed his hope that men might there drop their senseless competition and take a quiet, thoughtful hour to learn a lesson of the little ants.

All these things are well-known facts to a few of your scientists; yet you go about with blinded eyes and careless feet, treading on the little artisans, overthrowing their cities, kicking into the grass their tiny heaps of pebbles, which they have brought out thoughtfully into the sunshine in order to store up a little of the sun's mighty energy and take it down to their homes, in order

to bring their little ones warmly into the world. If these marvelous little people think about you at all, they must regard you as the cultured Romans regarded the northern barbarians, who swarmed down into their sacred city, noisy, drunken, impossible brutes that stabled their rough ponies in the temples of the gods. But we are forgetting the bees, and the curiosities of your scientific amenities.

There appeared, as I have said, a charming idyl of the life of the bee, and seeing that it was popular your scientific censors joined cheerfully in the moving crowd. They had stoned several of their own number who had gone ahead to see for themselves, and who had written plain truths of the bees and the birds; but then these truths were new, and no great popular writer had championed them; so it was safe for the wizards to peep and mutter. Now a great writer tells a bee-story in charming language; the pleased crowds follow him, and presto! the scientific critics are leading the crowd. "Bravo," cries one; "Perfect," says another; "Great literature, great science," echoes a third. And the astonishing thing, to a rabbit, is that these applauding scientists have utterly lost sight of their late zeal for truth in the new clamor. For this life of the bee, excellent as it is from the viewpoint of a literary man, is crammed full of errors and delusions from the viewpoint of the scientist and

the bee-keeper. Spite of the imposing array of reference books named in the first chapter and the author's expressed determination to hold close to facts and record only what he has seen, he cannot hold himself down to facts for even a solitary paragraph. His foot touches the ground for a moment, and in that very moment some suggestive action of the bees seizes upon his imagination, which immediately whirls him away with the magic of Solomon's seal into realms of pure romance, where there is not a solitary fact to hinder his flight. And the old bee-keepers, who for half a century have handled these incomprehensible insects, simply shake their heads as they read, and say that every man has a right to his own fancy.

To take the very simplest instance, as we approach the hive and before we look into it, even those who draw near without any knowledge or experience may note that the bees allow certain people to examine or rifle the hive without opposition. "In the large, slow gestures that traverse their dwellings without molesting them," writes this charming historian, "the bees imagine that it is not the attack of an enemy, against whom defense is possible, but a natural catastrophe whereto they do well to submit." Now the Rabbit would hardly advise you to approach a beehive, clothed in a few large gestures that transform you into an elemental catastrophe. Sitting for hours among

the hives, the Rabbit has noticed only two conditions that offer you a reasonable amount of protection. First, there must be no disagreeable odor or excess of perspiration about you, for bees are sensitive to such things. No two persons smell alike — any dog will tell you as much — and certain persons, either from perspiring too freely or from some other cause, can never approach a hive without exciting the bees' anger, no matter how slow or elemental their gestures. Indeed, the Rabbit knows one bee-keeper who, in a moment of vanity, dyed his beard, and was indignantly set upon by his own bees the instant he approached his hives. The second condition is to forget fear, for in some subtle, telepathic way the bees recognize your mental attitude, far more quickly and surely even than a watch-dog, and you have absolutely no chance of welcome unless you learn to leave your fears behind you.

. So with other matters in this idyllic story, — with the solicitous queen, for instance, "who will dive for an instant into flower-filled space, as the swimmer dives into the sea that is filled with pearls, but under pain of death it behooves her to return speedily and breathe the crowd, as the swimmer must return and breathe the air. Isolate her, and however abundant the food or favorable the temperature, she will expire in a few days, not of hunger or cold, but of loneliness." It seems

somewhat prosaic, indeed almost brutal, to record, after such an ideal of queenly solicitude, that the queen is generally so lazy and probably stupid, so used to being fed by the nurse-bees, that she cannot or will not feed herself. Therefore a bee-keeper, in sending a queen on a long journey, will usually put honey and a few attendants in the box with her, so that the nurses may put into the queen's mouth the drop of honey which she is too stupid to take herself, though it is under her very nose.

So also with the poetic nuptial flight and many other things, which in this record become pure fairy-stories. With just a sufficient soil of fact to start any healthy imagination into vigorous growth, he shoots up into the upper air of fancy, where every instinctive act of the busy little people appears clothed with marvelous beauty and suggestiveness, as the rough convex earth appears like a pretty Delft saucer when your air-voyager looks down upon it from a balloon. No wonder that such a method of treatment appeals to a literary man, for in the life of the bee are so many incomprehensible things that imagination is the only factor at present competent to deal with them. If you would see it for yourself, take a spare queen and a cluster of bees and put them together, with a few cells of honey, in a roomy box, with a glass top through which you can watch all their actions. The bees

invariably feed their queen first and then eat a little for themselves; but as the supply of honey runs low they cease to feed, starving themselves for their queen's sake apparently, and dying one by one. At last, when only one bee is left beside the queen, and one tiny drop of honey is all that remains of the precious store, then open your eyes for a curious thing. The starving bee takes the last morsel of honey, places it carefully in the queen's mouth, and falls over dead.

Now how are you going to deal with an act like that among insects? If they had brains and a nervous system like your own, living near you and sharing many of your feelings, as your dog does, you might interpret such an act with some small degree of accuracy; but of a bee, with his overpowering instincts, with his incomprehensible stupidity coupled with some rare different thing, which a wise bee-keeper never names, you must either say that it is a purely mechanical action, without any conscious motive or feeling, or else call up your imagination, and all aboard for a romantic and dramatic journey to the happy islands. Maeterlinck has done the latter most delightfully; but what stumps the Rabbit's philosophy is that your scientists, who a moment ago were clubbing the nature writers for recording what facts and suggestive actions they had seen among intelligent and highly developed animals, are now acclaiming

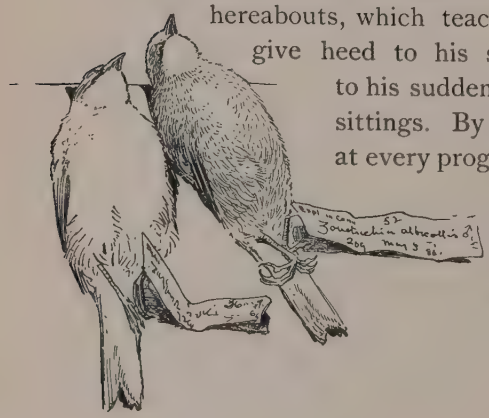
this bee-story as the model of literary grace and scientific accuracy.

Far be it from the Rabbit to offer this bit of natural history, this taste of honey fresh from the honeycomb, as a criticism upon the methods or the facts or the imagination of one who attempts to combine literature and science in a dramatic bee-story. He has lived long enough to learn that the brier patch is big enough for several rabbits, even though one studies the formation of briers, and another is chiefly interested in the olive sheen of the branches and the play and sunlight on the dead leaves, while a third has no eyes save for the antics of young rabbit cubs when they first come out of the brush-pile in which they were born. Life is the only interesting thing in our philosophy, and the life even of a bee has plenty of mystery left after the biologist and the bee-keeper and the literary man have all finished their examinations.

As with the bird, whom we have almost forgotten in following this romance of the bee, so with the more highly developed and intelligent animal, whom your scientists thought they knew all about because they had him accurately classified and had measured his cranium and labeled his stuffed skin in a museum. Other naturalists, unsatisfied with such superficial knowledge, go out into the woods to watch the animal for themselves, and presently they are writing of new habits

and traits which open before your eyes a whole new world of natural history, a world of living and breathing animals, rather than a shelf of dead specimens. Your great scientists are silent, knowing well how big is life and how small is knowledge; but instantly all the little scientists raise a cry of opposition. They have not seen these things; therefore you cannot have seen them. Many of your papers, the echoes of public clamor, take up the cry and ridicule the new observer, grabbing his legs and trying to hold him back. Presently another man rises quietly and goes ahead, and reports that what your observer saw there in the half-light is quite true, for now with his eyes opened he can see it himself. Others join him, and presently — such is the scientific way from Bruno down — it is recorded in your books as something which, of course, everybody always knew.

Possibly in your scientific philosophy these curious amenities may be a good thing, like the briers hereabouts, which teach a young rabbit to give heed to his steps and especially to his sudden uprisings and downsittings. By dragging your weight at every progressive foot you teach your leaders to go slowly, and by taking Donnybrook Fair as a model, hitting

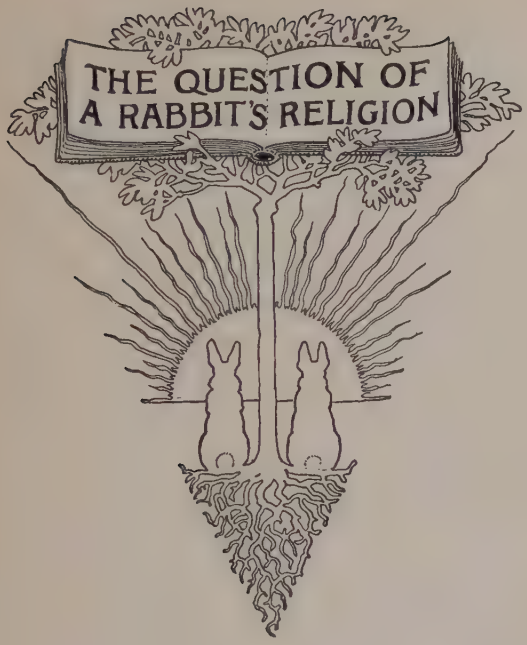


every head that rises above your own, you make it quite certain that only the strong heads shall survive. Strong heads are doubtless excellent things; but it hardly needs a rabbit to point out that even such heads know how to ache, and that such a philosophy is somewhat detrimental to that large charity which Nature doubtless intended you to cultivate with your progress.

Only yesterday, as the Rabbit followed a dim trail in an unknown thicket, he stopped suddenly at seeing in front of him a queer arrangement of brush and stakes and a narrow gateway, with one tense sapling bending suspiciously over the runway. Once, led by his curiosity, which in animals as in men is the beginning of knowledge, the Rabbit would have gone straight ahead to find out for himself what such an unnatural arrangement meant; but he now finds that all his knowledge only ends in a larger mystery, and he has grown somewhat cautious about running his head against every wall of the universe for no better reason than because he does not understand it. As he hesitated a young rabbit hopped eagerly by him seeking for knowledge. The next moment he had run his head into a wire noose, and was jerked into the air with a broken neck by the spring of a boy's twitch-up.

The path was now quite free and safe for other feet to follow; but every rabbit who passed that

way during the night could not help noticing that over the safe trail hung the body of the young rabbit who first investigated the mystery. The Rabbit has no envy, therefore, of those men who go ahead of your race to break the trail, and who incidentally find their own hearts broken as well.


THE QUESTION OF
A RABBIT'S RELIGION

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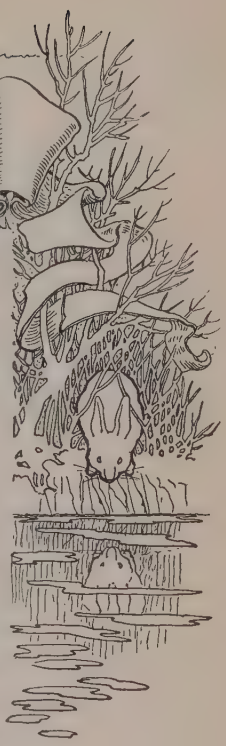


TO most men it will seem a ridiculous thing to speak of an animal's religion, or to listen with any patience to the Rabbit's opinion on the subject. "Preposterous!" you exclaim; "how could a rabbit have religion?" And you are undoubtedly right, thinking of the magnificent structure of belief and worship which your fathers have built for you during the centuries. Possibly, however, you have overlooked a few interesting and suggestive trifles from your present exalted viewpoint, or else, like a little child going on a journey, have burdened yourselves with a few cherished incumbrances. When Mr. MacGreggor came home from church this morning he was talking earnestly about Adam and predestination, and by force of long habit the poor man thinks that both these things are essential to his religion.

Now the trouble with Adam was that he never was a boy, and so missed the most interesting part of his life, to say nothing of the knowledge and experience which only a boy can accumulate.

That is precisely the trouble with Mr. MacGreggor's idea of religion, and indeed with most of your established religious standards. You forget that religion had a boyhood; that instead of being rational and theological, and therefore full of doubts, it was at one time natural and spontaneous and gladly sure of itself, as only boyhood knows how to be.

According to your great teachers religion has always two elements, corresponding to your own childhood and manhood; it is part intuition and part reason, intuition at its purest and reason at its highest point, both at work upon the final questions of life. Now the Rabbit has intuition, that is, inborn knowledge independent of his senses, as you admit when you speak of his instinct; he has also, as we have seen, some good claim to elemental reasoning. Apparently, then, there is no intrinsic impossibility in the idea of his possessing at least a rudimentary religion, since he has some small measure of the two powers, of reason and intuition, out of which your own religion first sprang. Perhaps we may find, by forgetting Adam and predestination, and thinking a little in our own heads, that this is more than a bare possibility. At least, as a pleasant occupation for an idle hour, we may begin with a known fact and follow it leisurely out into the unknown, just as one follows a little wild brook in order to see for himself to what wide ocean it may at last lead him.

This is the little fact with which we start off pleasantly together: most of your hunters and naturalists have noticed, with Thoreau, that a rabbit, who is vocally silent all his life, cries out a loud appeal when wounded or in danger, or when he lies down for his last sleep. If your naturalists had given it a moment's thought, they might possibly have seen a reason in this apparently insignificant fact, which is not to be explained by examining a rabbit's upper lip to see if it be cleft or not, — which thing they think is of vast importance in their books, as if we rabbits should classify men by the dimples in their chins. It appears, however, that most of your naturalists are not concerned with thinking, being too much occupied, probably, in examining bones and in making classifications; and so the rabbit's last cry and the herd-laws of the caribou and the pack-laws of the wolves, and a multitude of other things very suggestive to a rabbit mind, are passed over with the words "reflex impulse," or some other unmeaning shibboleth. It is much easier, as your great Virchow suggested to a congress of biologists, to make one large and brilliant generalization than to get at the true contents of one small cranium.

The first thought that arises out of our simple fact takes the form of a question; and this, as Newton found when he saw an apple fall and asked why, is the beginning of all knowledge.

Why should a silent and solitary rabbit, with none of his own kind near to hear him, cry out in time of pain or danger? The Rabbit has noticed that men and women do the same thing, more or less unconsciously. Sometimes their cry takes the form of a prayer; sometimes it is an exclamation, with more pith and point, and doubtless more efficacy also, than all the vain repetitions of the litany. Your children, when quite alone, also cry out in pain or danger; and all young wild animals break their habitual silence with a cry whenever their life is threatened. It is from the latter that we get our first hint of the profound meaning of this appeal.

Without going into argument or abundant illustrations, which you may easily find for yourself, it may be set down as true that the first object of this cry is to call the attention of the strong mother animals to the needs of their helpless offspring. In a word, nature has provided that attendant strength shall always be made conscious of dependent weakness; and when the strength wanders away, or forgets its duty for a moment, it is this sharp cry which invariably brings it quickly back to protect and defend the helpless.

So far we have glimpsed only one side of this thoughtful arrangement, and nature never leaves such an important work half done. She has provided that a mother hears and attends when a little

one cries out to her; but such a provision would be utterly useless unless nature also provided that the little one should have some sense or instinct or intuition — call it what you will, it makes no difference — of something or some one outside itself to whom it may confidently call. The cry we are considering is not an involuntary exclamation of fright, without sense or reason (even our involuntary actions are founded on deep reasons), for when frightened the little wild animal makes no sound but invariably keeps very still, obeying the instinct to crouch where he is and let nature's perfect coloring hide him. Only when this fails does he break silence, crying out when he is seized or when his need is greatest. Neither is the cry universal; for among the lower orders the little ones rarely cry out under such circumstances, though most of them are able to make sounds, simply because their mothers take no care of them, and it would be useless to call since there is no familiar strength at hand to help or to heed their cry.

We have, therefore, among the higher orders of animals an apparently perfect and most thoughtful arrangement. Not only is the mother made conscious of her little one's needs, but the little one knows, or feels in some way, that its cry shall be heard and heeded. So this cry is, in its elemental essence, a prayer, though the little animal and the very little child have at first no definite idea of a

mother or a God, but only of some greater thing outside themselves to whom they may appeal.

Now if it should turn out that the old rabbit, who has lived alone for years without herd or pack to whom he can appeal, and whose mother is long since dead or forgotten, should in his last great extremity break his long silence and cry out to something or some one outside himself, even though he had no definite idea what it was or who it was to whom he appealed, then this cry also would be essentially a prayer, and the rabbit, for one moment at least, would have a religion. And if all his life long he had been dimly conscious of some living and invisible presence in his lonely brier patch, but did not think it worth while to trouble this other reality while he could take care of himself, then this one moment, with its curious elemental sense of some great living thing brooding over the solitudes, might extend over an animal's whole lifetime. The Rabbit does not assert now that this is so, but only suggests it as a possibility which we have too long overlooked, in order to start our loitering thoughts away from the little springs of instinct. And so the very first turn of our little brook, which runs on as if it were going somewhere, brings us the suggestion of the far-off sea.

Our next step into the unknown brings us to the beginnings of that human religion of which we are both thinking; and here.the Rabbit must refer you

to your own good teachers whenever you doubt or hesitate to follow his leading. He only ventures to suggest timidly that all races and tribes of men have almost unconsciously chosen the twilight hour for their time of worship, expressing thereby the sad conviction that their religion, like all their knowledge, is part light and part darkness. It is not well, therefore, to grow dogmatic, or to be too sure about a thing so tender and beautiful, and yet so immeasurable, as the twilight.

There is a certain old minister, grown wise and kind from much thought and much living with his fellows, who often lingers by the Rabbit's brier patch; and by listening to this wise man, and by thinking in his own head, the Rabbit has sought to understand just what you men mean by religion. Laying aside for a moment your impossible creeds, which were mostly made by your ancestors when they were half barbarous and only half educated, and giving heed only to that which is essential, the Rabbit finds that all your religions in their utmost simplicity have two fundamental factors.

The first factor is that you recognize, by feeling or intuition, the invisible presence in the world of some larger life than your own; just as men and women, in their sanest moments, sometimes recognize the presence of some one else in a dark room, or feel in the midst of a great crowd or a great solitude the coming of some loved companion,

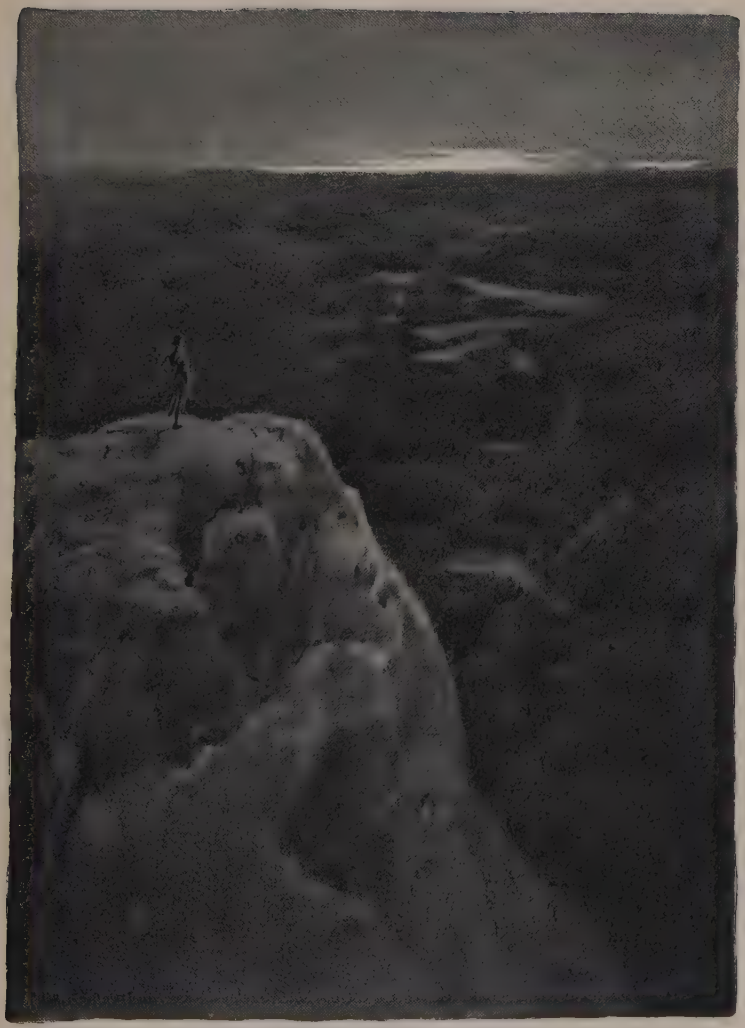
though they can neither see nor hear him, nor can they explain by any known senses the knowledge of his certain presence. It is precisely this intuition of a great unseen life, a feeling widespread as the race of men, which is the source of all the religions upon earth. Your scientists sometimes explain it by saying that your savage ancestors gave personality to the storms and the powers of nature; but that is a secondary, not a primary, cause. The fundamental reality seems to be the intuitive recognition of the presence of a great life, not their own, which pervades all nature. Afterwards, as human reason slowly develops, men think and make creeds, people the earth with gods and demons, and do all sorts of uncertain things with this certain intuition. And this causes all the systems and philosophies of religion which unite and yet divide your race; for these are only the attempts to explain by reason and custom a fact which all living men already know by intuition.

It is the curious opinion of your Haeckel, and of other biologists who attempt to find a soul by anatomy, that all your great subjective ideas, of God and faith and duty and morality, are purely human inventions. Some one man manufactured his own idea, and being pleased with it he straightway proceeded to preach it to a dependent and thoughtless multitude, who received it without question and taught it to their children. And this

is his interesting theory of religion, like an apple hung up in the air without branch or stock or root to support its rosy pretensions. According to the Rabbit's philosophy, which must include a history of religions as well as the microscopic examination of a nerve-center, exactly the reverse is probably true. All these great subjective ideas were known or felt dimly by multitudes for ages, until some genius arose and gave definite expression to that which was found indefinitely in every human heart. For if your history has taught you anything, it has surely taught you this, that it is useless to attempt to promulgate any law or ideal or moral standard in any race, with any idea of permanence, unless your standard finds an answer in the intuitions of the human heart. Just so far as the law or ideal harmonizes with the conviction of their own souls, men welcome it and teach it to their children; but the instant it clashes with their own convictions they distrust it and look for another, which will better express their own sense of permanent reality. As it is written in the Upanishads, "The King said to Yagnavalkya, 'What is the light of man?' And Yagnavalkya said, 'The Self alone in his light, the Self hidden in the heart, surrounded by the senses, a person of light, consisting of knowledge!'" And your own greatest religious teacher quoted no outward standards for his new gospel, but sent his hearers deep into their own hearts, and

told a few homely parables of daily living in order to explain the deepest mysteries of the divine government. Indeed, no idea seems long to prevail or endure in your human society which does not rest squarely upon your own soul's emphasis, rather than upon any outward authority.

Your own experience to-day, if you but enter the wilderness alone and sit there for a single hour, quiet and responsive, may suggest to you the true origin of all religions. The first man that roamed the solitudes found a God there, quite as real, if not quite as logical, as the pure being of Hegel's profound philosophy. Wandering alone in the vast silence and mystery of nature, he came to feel the presence of some one else moving in the solitudes, some one who spoke in flowers and trees and stars, and in life that continually renews itself, instead of in canoes or wigwams, which were the man's own mode of expression. Knowing his own will as the only force which he could possibly comprehend, the primitive man came to discern behind the multitude of nature's forces the will of that Some One whose presence he had long felt. So he knew the God at last, without knowing his name. That was the first, pure, intuitive knowledge of religion, knowledge as clear yet as mysterious as the light; and many of your later conceptions, as expressed in your curious creeds and symbols, seem to the Rabbit to belong to that process which one of your



"Wandering alone in the vast silence
and mystery of nature"

religious poets called "darkening counsel by words without knowledge." As your apostle to the nations declared, "The world by wisdom knew not God," that is, by its own reasoning the world lost something of the clearness and surety of its intuitive perceptions; and so your great teacher suggested that your God had hidden some things from the wise and prudent to reveal them unto children.

Now, since you have lost much of your intuitive power in following the long road to reason, and since the animals' intuitions are admittedly much keener than your own, it seems to the Rabbit only a reasonable question to ask, What is there to prevent the animal also from being more or less dimly conscious of that invisible Life, which man first discerned through his intuitions? We cannot, of course, form any abstract conceptions of that life, or make creeds, or otherwise darken our inward counsel by words without knowledge, such power being given only unto men; but that very fact may possibly make the feeling itself all the more real. A woman, I am told, sometimes persists in loving and redeeming a man when every reason of her own, and all the philosophies of her neighbors, are up in arms against the feeling. It is possible also that, spite of numerous theologies and creeds, the great Life may be too infinite, too intangible a thing, like morning mist shot through by sunlight, for sense-bound

mortals to conceive under definite forms or symbols; and so your ancestors were ruled by a profound philosophy when they chose the twilight hour, with its mingled light and darkness, for their time of worship.

The Rabbit once overheard a man, a great teacher of psychology, talking to a little child, and asking the child to look in his own head and tell the man what kind of a mental picture of God he found there. The child's answer was silence, which, I have noticed, is the answer of very wise men to the last profound questions of life, — a silence not altogether of ignorance, but of thoughts and feelings too intangible to be grasped and too great to be expressed. So there are others beside the Rabbit who may know or feel a thing strongly, and yet be quite helpless to explain the how and the wherefore.

Among wild animals, certainly, the feeling of the presence of an unsensed friend or enemy is so strong at times that even your hunters have noticed and wondered about it. So real is the feeling that it overmasters the keen senses upon which we usually depend. A deer, for instance, usually trusts his nose and his ears absolutely; but let a deer once feel the presence of danger, and though he can neither hear nor smell the cause of his alarm, he moves swiftly and silently away without a question. A young deer, in such cases,

will often double back to leeward of his trail and hide, or else climb a hilltop and watch from a distance, until he has verified by eye and nose the truth of his warning; but after a few such experiences, when the enemy has indeed appeared to his senses and so proved that the feeling was well founded, he learns to trust his intuitions and to obey them instantly, even when his keen senses bring no message whatever to enlighten him.

Such warnings and intuitions are not common, to be sure, though they are more numerous in both animals and men than you have supposed; and the reason why they often pass unnoticed is not far to seek. It would seem, to a rabbit mind, that if indeed there be some one resembling your God in the universe, his influence would reach out continually to all his creatures. So your prophet, when he pictured a holy city as the symbol of divine government, gave it many gates on every side which were wide open continually; not only that your prayers might enter in, but that whatever spiritual influences abode there might pass out freely to meet you. Some would feel and understand the influence quicker than others, partly perhaps because they were more finely organized, but largely because they were in a spirit and a mood to receive so subtle a message. It is not, therefore, because your God has favorites, or is kinder to one than to another, but simply

because the majority of men, as well as animals, are too busy with filling their hands or their stomachs, too much occupied with the loud things of sense to notice the silent things of the spirit. And this the Rabbit learned, with many other things, from the old minister who went on his way to the quiet woods, one perfect day, reading to himself from a noble book. "Be still," he repeated in a hushed voice, "be still and know that I am God."

Now the animal is often very still, at peace with himself and with all the universe; and to whatever subtle influences are abroad in the world we answer, for we learned long since that they are of more import than all the crashing of the thunder. Therefore are our instincts and intuitions keener than yours; we know many things that you might know, were you more responsive to what is whispered in the world all around you.

The Rabbit must wonder sometimes, when he sees a man teaching a dog, why it should never occur to the man that his dog has something to teach him. A dog has been known to feel the trouble and to mourn the death of a master who was far away, and a thousand times your dogs have been noticed to feel the coming of a master long before any purely physical sense could give the message. More than this, you have noticed that the courage and devotion and all the best qualities even of a dog or horse are greatly

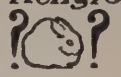
developed by the simple fact that he recognizes a master's spirit above him. And so your great Bacon writes, in one of his famous essays, that any indifference to a Being greater than yourself must destroy your own growth and nobility. "For take an example of a dog," he says, "and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man of superior nature, who to him is instead of a God, which courage is manifestly such as that creature could never attain without confidence in a better nature than his own."

Your dog certainly does not obtain his idea of a master's spirit through the senses, for to his senses man is not nearly so powerful or noble as many of your great beasts. Whatever idea your dog has of you, as his master, is the recognition in you of some mental or spiritual quality, and is gained by him through some mental or spiritual perception. What is there, therefore, to prevent all animals from feeling more or less surely the simple presence of one whom all your religions recognize as a master and ruler of the solitudes, present and active in all things, though no mortal eye can see him nor any ear hear the sound of his footsteps?

With this thought of the greater Life, which man must know intuitively before he can reason about it, is the second fundamental conception of

all the religions of men; that is the idea of a common kinship, or brotherhood, in view of the great common life. It is surely not good for the man or the animal to be alone. The perception of this truth drew men out of their solitary places and gathered them together, first into families, then into tribes and nations. "God setteth the solitary in families," was your great religious poet's recognition of the simple fact that all your unity is based squarely upon the conception of a great unifying life over you. The knowledge of this truth still draws men together, I am told, and must at last, if it have any real value, draw even the scattered nations together and stop their senseless wars and fightings; so that what you now call patriotism will presently appear in its true light, as a barbarous thing, a survival of savagery, in so far as it shuts out of man's generous consideration a fellow-man who happens to live on the other side of a pond or some other purely imaginary boundary line.

Whether this feeling of a common kinship is a corollary of the other, or precedes it, is unimportant. A very great teacher once said, speaking to various races and conditions, "For one is your master, and ye are all brethren," evidently thinking, from this expression, that men first find the great Life and then are united by it; which is the universal experience, I am told, of a sect called the Christians.



But whether first or second in point of time, the feeling of a common brotherhood is found with a feeling of the overshadowing great Life as the two suggestive characteristics of all religions in their utmost simplicity. The universal *credo* has two articles, — I believe in God and Man. All the others are more or less local and temporary; but these stand fast in every age and place.

Now, just as the dim consciousness of the great Life is possible to the animal, so also is the second characteristic of a common brotherhood. Indeed, if the Rabbit were to judge only by the men who live nearest the brier patch, it would seem that men forget or overlook their kinship, as the practical factor of their religion, quite as often as certain animals, — the buffalo tribes, for instance, who place the weakest and youngest members of their race in the center of a ring, so as to protect them by their own bodies from the storm and from prowling enemies. A man does that for his own family, but often forgets the larger family of whom he is a part, and who have also some claim to the same consideration. On the surface, at least, the Rabbit finds less quarreling, less cheating, less self-seeking, less overreaching and trampling on the rights of others in a wolf-pack or a caribou-herd than he finds in a city of men.

You have still many queer ideas about animals, which you would do well to modify, if you are

ever to develop a reasonable philosophy. You think, for instance, that rabbits are proverbially gentle and timid, and that wolves tear and devour each other, and snatch the food out of each other's mouths. Nothing could be farther from the actual truth. As a matter of fact, rabbits do considerable fighting on occasions. I have seen two rabbits belabor each other until not a shred of skin was left on either back, and they laid down side by side and died; and I must confess that a wolf is more considerate of his own kind than any rabbit. That some power for which they are not responsible has made the wolves eaters of flesh, instead of good young carrots and clover, is a little hard on the rabbits at times; but it must not prejudice our philosophy, which, you know, is pure knowledge above all prejudice. Wolves have been known to eat each other, to be sure; so have men; but that is only on rare occasions when they are driven stark crazy and irresponsible by hunger. The wolf-pack has well-defined regulations, apparently for the common good, and no wolf ever thinks of breaking them. If he does, he is instantly punished, or killed, or driven out of the pack by his fellows. Whatever a wolf kills belongs to himself only if it be too small a mouthful for two; and even then he often shares it freely with the cubs. Whatever large game he kills belongs to his pack, if they are hungry, before he has

taken the first mouthful. Obviously such a sane and wholesome regulation among men would destroy half their enterprises and corporations, which seem to the Rabbit to be founded upon individual greed rather than upon kinship or the common good.

As for strife and division, except when two full-blooded wolves settle the question of a mate in a fair fight, which either is at liberty to decline, or when two splendid big brutes decide the leadership of the pack, as strong men once did, by a trial of strength and endurance, you may follow a wolf-clan for years without finding a solitary trace of quarreling or strife amongst them. The stern and withal just laws of the wolf-pack, if carried out in human society, would render useless more than half of all the wretched law-courts upon earth. They would make it impossible also for one part of a city to starve and freeze, while another part had more food and fuel than it could possibly use; which is, I am told, the incomprehensible custom among men.

All gregarious animals — and the Rabbit has spent a good part of his life in their neighborhood — have some practical idea of kinship and the common good. When they find food in starvation times they send out the food-cry, or else a silent summoning impulse, for which the Rabbit has no name, to call all that are hungry to the feast which they have discovered. So, if you scatter

food in your yard in the bitter winter morning, you will note a curious thing. The first birds that find the feast, instead of holding and hiding it all for themselves, chirp eagerly as they feed, and seem to call in every hungry wanderer within hearing; and then, if you watch, you will note the coming of little wild birds who never, under ordinary circumstances, approach a human dwelling, and whose habitation is miles away in the pine woods; so far away, indeed, that it is out of the question that any ordinary bird-call should reach them.

So also with the animals. The most cruel of them, like the fisher-weasel, never refuses a bite of his kill to the hungry kinsmen who follow his trail. "Even the young lions do lack and suffer hunger," and "seek their meat from God." When they find it, judging by the way they share it freely, it would seem to a simple rabbit that they have some practical sense of the common source of our common mercies, — more, perhaps, than some of your merchants, who, when there is a scarcity of food or fuel, immediately "corner" the whole supply, that they may make profit for themselves out of the necessity of their neighbors.

It is not a question now of whether or not the animal has an abstract idea of religion, or any psychological consciousness of the common good, which some of your economists claim is the foundation of your social morality. Your children are

held to somewhat strict account, and you justly claim for them a place in the moral and religious world long before they show any indication of possessing abstract ideas; and with the exception of a few extreme Calvinists, who have no humor, the Rabbit has never heard of any class of people who claimed that your religious welfare, here or hereafter, was determined by psychological consciousness. Indeed, my old minister was saying recently that he would make shift to get along very well without the thirty-nine articles, provided he could inculcate a few homely practical virtues of love and truth and mercy and justice among his congregation.

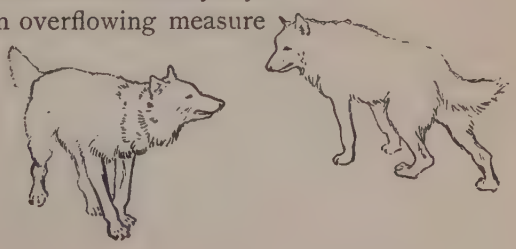
Probably the animals have no religious articles, and nothing that you could accurately call a psychological consciousness of religious truth. Nevertheless their practical feeling of kinship, of protection over their own helpless young and of responsibility to the common herd or flock, seems to hold all their lives in a tremendous grasp. One of the noblest expressions of the greatest philosopher that mankind has thus far produced is this, "I will not, in my own person, violate the dignity of humanity"; and one who watches gregarious birds or animals with any patience and sympathy is forced to the conclusion that the individual bird or animal, without any such profound consciousness as marked Kant's deep reasoning, is still

strangely averse to going against the good ways and habits of his own community. Now men, I am told, possess abundant abstract ideas and an excellent psychological consciousness of a common good. It is expressed in their law; it is preached in their churches, and on Sundays they approve of it heartily. In their business, however, it is seldom mentioned. A thoughtless and destructive idea of competition takes its place; and as business now seems to rule their lives, the life is in consequence largely wrong, while their psychological consciousness of a common good is all right. At least, so it seems to a rabbit, who has seen a pack of hungry wolves hunt intelligently and patiently together for the common good, instead of each one competing madly with all the others, trying to kill more for himself than he could possibly eat, while his fellows went hungry.

Even in the meeting of strangers, when a wolf meets another wolf who is not of the same pack, instead of competing violently and flying at each other's throat, as you suppose, a kind of dignified courtesy prevails among the wolf clans whenever they cross each other's range. Ordinarily they hold to the strict rule which prevails among animals, in distinction from men, of minding severely their own personal business; but when curiosity or loneliness or mutual interest gets the better of their natural reserve, then any man who watches

may see an approach and an introduction to make him blush for his own cub manners in the presence of distinguished people. At first the two strangers pass at a distance, looking shyly at each other, like two children; then a gradual approach, a touching of noses, and a meeting at last with all the formality of two German officers. When game is scarce the two wolves presently proceed to hunt together, one lying in ambush while the other drives the quarry, and both sharing in the result of the hunt without any trace of competition or quarrel. And these are the animals whom men, who overreach and crush each other in business, and who separate themselves in society like the sheep and goats of the final judgment, have written down as the symbols of greed and rapacity.

The Rabbit has carefully avoided, as you see, the wolf's tame brothers, who abide in your own houses, for the simple reason that the instances of their practical care for each other and their fidelity to a master are so many that one cannot choose among them. Go into the first village of men and inquire at the first house in the first street, and you will hardly fail to find some sad story of human selfishness or ingratitude or disloyalty or dishonored love; but search the records of ten thousand dogs, and you will hardly find a case where your four-footed friend has repaid your trust with disloyalty, or has failed to give back an overflowing measure



of gratitude and devotion for the few crumbs of care or attention that you carelessly bestowed upon him. If it be true, as my old minister says, that "by their fruits ye shall know them," then it seems to the Rabbit that the wolf-pack and the caribou-herd and the flock of hungry birds and your own faithful dog have some practical claim to the fruits of religion.

It will be said at once that gregarious animals hold together in this considerate way simply because they know no better. A pity, then, that you do not devote your talents to accumulating some of their ignorance, which seems rather blissful in view of your own competitive methods. Your naturalists will cry "instinct" to explain it all; but why should you introduce an unknown and indefinite factor, when this reasonable animal habit is explained more simply and easily by studying the growth of those social virtues that you find in your own heads and hearts? Whatever philanthropy men possess — and the Rabbit has seen men and women go through the brier patch whose mantle of charity was broad enough to cover every living thing — is very largely the result of a simple process of extension, like the growth of a seed, from small beginnings to magnificent endings. From his birth your child finds himself surrounded by love and protection, and whatever seed of love is planted within him awakens and grows under the

favorable influences. First he returns love to his own mother, then to his own family and brethren; and gradually the feeling which he learns to value as the most precious thing in his own family life slowly broadens itself to include his neighbors also, and then in fainter and fainter degree his own tribe and nation and race. In a word, man seems to get the first factor of his religion from the God himself; the second factor he receives from his own mother and his own people. Now, weak and small as the animals are, we have all felt the shelter and protection of a mother's love; and since animals have memories, and naturally imitate their superiors, who shall say that the consideration which an animal shows to his own kind is not, partly at least, a memory and an imitation of that care which he received from his own mother, and of that consideration which the whole herd showed to a little ignorant cub when he was too young and thoughtless and inexperienced to face the world alone? Certainly such a conception, which proceeds logically from step to step, seems far more rational to the Rabbit than to call the animal's social life a matter of blind instinct, as if he did not have a plain history which all who will may read.

A great religious teacher, whom the old minister says you reverence as inspired, when he would teach his people justice and courtesy to strangers said to them simply, "For ye know what is in a

stranger's heart, seeing that ye also were strangers in the land of Egypt." Now the animals have excellent memories; they remember the good and the evil which has happened to them in the past, and invariably they shape their present actions by the remembrance. It is, to say the least, well within the bounds of possibility that an animal's kindly attitude to his fellows is, like your own, the memory and the imitation of that consideration which he himself received from his youth up.

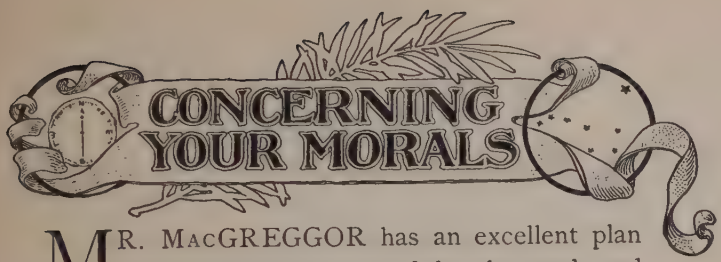
Your dog might teach you as much, if you but thought a moment of his utter lack of nature's manners. You have shown him consideration, and among yourselves he generally returns it by attending to what he considers his own affairs; but the moment he enters the woods he is the only unmannerly creature in the universe. He hunts when not hungry, disturbs the peace, meddles with every creature which his brothers, the wolf and the fox, pass by indifferently when they are not hunting for food — and all simply because he has not had the wild training of treating other animals with consideration, as they invariably treat each other. To a rabbit there seems to be no need whatever for you to call the gregarious life of animals a mysterious instinct, which none of you understands, when your own dog may give you an object-lesson, and when there is in your own hearts a natural feeling and experience by which you can understand it perfectly.

The sense of a common lot, therefore, which is the second characteristic of all religions, whatever be its unknown origin and natural growth, may find a wee small place even in a rabbit's breast. And the fact is not altered, even though you say that the animal cannot reason or have any definite consciousness of his kinship to other animals.

Thus far the Rabbit has only suggested the possibility of a natural and universal religion. He might, of course, change his argument and quote from the books of all your great naturalists, from Darwin to Haeckel, that all the powers of the human mind are but the development of elementary powers that are active in the animal; which would settle at once the question of a rabbit's right to some elementary reason and religion. Or he might assert positively, after the manner of men, that the animal is naturally and spontaneously religious; that he has a kindly feeling for his fellows because they are like himself; that he feels the presence of the great unseen Life that broods alike over the quiet solitudes and the noisy cities of men; that his first and last cry is a more or less conscious appeal to a strength outside himself, or what you men call a prayer; and that he joins voices with the great psalmist of your religion in saying, "All men and beasts praise the name of the Lord." However, it is not the Rabbit's way to dogmatize, or to maintain that what he finds good philosophy

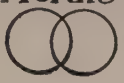
in the brier patch would bring consolation in the dusty cliffs and canyons where you live, for some unaccountable reason. Dogmatism is, first, the mask of ignorance and prejudice, and, second, as your Kant pointed out, a kind of noisy stimulus to one who is not quite certain of his own opinions; and a rabbit who would so far forget himself as to dogmatize, even to another rabbit, would find no mate, nor ever play with his fellows in the moonlight. Truth generally speaks in whispers and suggestions, leaving error to cry aloud in the streets. The Rabbit is therefore content to note one or two suggestive things, which your naturalists overlooked when they examined our teeth and gave us a Latin name, and went away thinking they had found out all about us.

CONCERNING
YOUR MORALS



MR. MACGREGGOR has an excellent plan of preparing his ground for the good seed by first clearing away the rank weeds and underbrush, and the Rabbit is glad to copy any good thing that he finds, even in Mr. MacGreggor's peculiar philosophy. Especially so in the matter of morals, which is, perhaps, the most difficult subject to comprehend in the whole field of natural history. With a good plan before us, however, we may at least make a beginning by clearing away our mental weeds and other misconceptions. And the very first of these is that all human immorality is a reversion to animal principles. So you speak of "animality" and "beastliness" and "brutality," as if the degradation of your lowest classes were simply a return to the normal conditions of a purely animal society.

It is, of course, impossible to know all the causes which lead to moral degradation among men; but, so far as the Rabbit can understand them, there are at least five evil influences at work among those unfortunate classes who have fallen below the plane



of your moral standards. The first and simplest of these is personal uncleanness, dirt and degradation being so closely associated that one cannot help the question as to whether or not there be some relation of cause and effect between them. The Rabbit cannot help noticing that when you take a man in from the slums your first concern is to give him a bath; but whether for his sake or your own the Rabbit has not stopped to inquire. The second influence is the unequal distribution of the world's common goods which prevails among men, great wealth existing side by side with great poverty, the wealth growing selfish and indifferent, and the poverty growing desperate as it feels instinctively the sense of some great injustice. A third influence, closely associated with the second, is the prevalence of what is known as caste among you. True society is like an assembly of good physicians; every member must share his discovery and experience freely and without reward with all his brethren; but, spite of this high ideal which has been taught since Aristotle, your society tends to divide itself into castes, and much of the vice of your lower classes is simply an effort to copy on a lower scale the thoughtless pleasures and sensations of those envied houses whose doors, like the gates of the famous Appian Way, are forever closed against them. The fourth influence is the prevalence in certain classes of excessive eating and

drinking, leading to gluttony and all the numberless crimes and suffering that lay at the door of drunkenness. The fifth, which leads men astray and which destroys the moral sense perhaps quicker than any other, is the prevalence of sexual vices among men. And all these characteristics suggest to you, forsooth, that the immoral members of your society have fallen into the greeds and vices of a purely animal community.

Now if you stop to think about it a moment, you will see that not one of these immoral characteristics is to be found among the animals. The wild animal keeps himself perfectly clean under all circumstances. There is no wealth and no poverty, with their attendant vices, among the animals. Nature's common mercies belong to all alike, and are shared freely with the youngest and weakest members. There are no class distinctions, with indifference on one hand and envy on the other; there is no gluttony and no drunkenness; and such a thing as sexual vice is absolutely foreign to the wild animal. Men and caged monkeys, and a few domestic animals trained by you to abnormal habits, are the only creatures on the face of the earth that know and practice it. Once a year, sometimes indeed only once in two or seven years, the animal mates with his choice; and for all the rest of the time he lives with the other members of his tribe, and even with his own mate, without a trace of

the unchastity which is the cause of so much of your social degradation.

Far from being a return to the brute, therefore, most of your vices are pure human inventions, man having apparently used his reason in developing moral vices that the wild animals would not tolerate for an instant. And they are not confined to drunkenness and lechery and the greed of money. Your cruelty, as shown in your bull-fights and gladiatorial contests and stock jobbery and senseless business competition, would shock any animal who would think about it for an instant. All your foolish talk about race suicide, to which the Rabbit has recently listened, was an excellent philosophy for slave-owners anxious to increase their property, but is abhorrent to any reasonable being anxious to increase the moral standard of his race. It had no nobler origin than the desire of vicious kings to breed more soldiers for killing their fellow-men, and to breed enough thoughtless peasants to support their soldiers in degrading idleness; and it now results only in a larger increase of the incompetent and the unfit. While you are carefully breeding better dogs and horses and cattle every year, you pay no rational attention to your own breed of children, laying emphasis upon quantity rather than upon quality, and forgetting the lesson taught you by all the animals, — that chastity is natural, and that the first duty to unborn generations

is to bring them into the world by that process of careful selection which has gone on unnoticed for ten thousand years before your very eyes.

The idea, therefore, that you get your vices and immoralities from the animals is just a luxuriant patch of weeds and underbrush, which you must clear away before you can see things in their true light. Indeed, you can probably learn more from the wild animal concerning a reasonable morality than you can at present teach him.

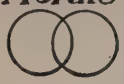
As your first misconception is the result of your own social conditions and of your strange blindness to the evident facts of natural animal life, so your second error seems to be the result of purely scientific theories. Your biologists, led by the French and German schools, assert confidently that all your morals are the result, first, of sensations of pleasure and pain, resulting in ideas of good and evil; and second, of habits and customs which fix the aforesaid ideas in your heads and make them permanent, resulting in what you call moral standards. Before the Rabbit can accept any such material and mechanical explanation of morals, he must note one or two suggestive facts which your biologists have evidently overlooked.

At the outset the Rabbit notes with interest that every man among you has a profound conviction that he is not altogether material; that his love for his child and his overmastering sense of duty are

not quite so mechanical as the steady revolution of a fly-wheel, or the union of carbon and oxygen in exact proportions. Convictions are intangible things, to be sure; but since they are there in your heads and hearts, quite as real as your bank accounts, we must find a reason for them, or else be deficient in our philosophy. And the very first discovery which awaits our search is that there is not a solitary sensation to account for them. Sensation has only two principles, — pleasure and pain. Your conscience has also two principles, — moral law and personal obligation; and the latter principles are utterly indifferent to the former, as Kant pointed out when he defined the moral sense as the opposition of your will to your natural egoistic impulses. These selfish impulses, since they are dependent upon sensation, invariably follow pleasure and avoid pain; while the law within you says simply, "Do the right, and never mind the pleasure or the pain that follows your action."

In your own heart you will sometimes find the truth, or at least the emphasis, of this deep philosophy. Indeed, all attempts of scientist and economist to merge moral obligation with sensation, and to identify morality with the sense of pleasure, have utterly failed in the face of your common human experience. According to the Rabbit Historicus, there was one Epicurus who frankly exalted pleasure to be the only god and the source

of all custom and morality; a certain Mill developed a universal utilitarianism simply from the pleasure resulting from doing good; and one philosophical Spencer explains all things by a universal mechanical rhythm; in which, however, the Rabbit finds nothing to furnish power for the mechanism and nothing to beat time for the rhythm. The primeval mist apparently says to itself, "Go to now, let us make a universe and a race of reasonable men and loving women, and let us dance as we work." Naturally the Rabbit, who like all true philosophers understands force only by noting the impulse of his own will and the response of his material body, must still try to understand not only the primeval mist but also the will in the heart of it, which started it all into harmonious motion. Not one of these systems, based upon mechanism and sensation, can stand for an instant in the face of Kant's famous categorical imperative, or of Tertullian's simple declaration that "there is a charm even in tortures which are endured for a just cause." The first man among you who stands up and says "I will because I ought" overthrows the whole structure of utilitarianism built up so carefully by these mechanical scientists. It is as if your boy set a twitch-up in the brier patch, and the first rabbit who passed that way simply cut the tense string with his teeth, leaving the whole ingenious structure as harmless as a brush fence.



So also with your biologists who, because there is an evident relation between thought and sensation, regard the two as identical, and because moral ideas are found most abundantly in highly organized brains, conclude that morality is only a matter of brain organization. Their contention, that morals are ultimately a matter of chemistry and anatomy, breaks down before the simple realities of life. A nerve change undoubtedly produces what you call sensation; but the Rabbit is trying to understand what produces the consciousness of the sensation and calls it pleasure or pain; and why, for instance, an immaterial thought of guilt produces a nerve change and brings a flush of blood to your face, quite as readily as the blow of a hand or some other material application of the force that you call heat. That the body alone affects the mind is the dictum of your biologists; but the Rabbit cannot help seeing that the mind profoundly affects all the functions of the body.

One of your great physiologists called Maudsley, who looked for a soul with his dissecting knife, would meet this observation with the declaration that what you call mind is only a metaphysical abstraction of all mental phenomena. The Rabbit must remember, however, that children and primitive races, who have no metaphysics and no labeled abstract ideas, are quite as certain of their minds as are your philosophers. He must

also recall the fact that in all nature there is no such thing as an abstraction; that the power of making abstractions, the very existence in your heads of abstract ideas of duty and law and love, lifts you instantly above the purely scientific realm of mechanical stimulus and sensation. If it be only another sensation that perceives a sensation, as your physiologist claims, then the Rabbit must still ask, "How is there any self in the physiologist's head to perceive that it is a sensation which perceives a sensation?" And there is no answer to the question, unless you admit at once that abstractions are the only permanent things in the universe.

"Upon what does the earth rest?" inquired a pupil of a great Hindu philosopher. "It rests upon the back of a great elephant, my son," said the wise man. "But what does the elephant stand on?" asked the pupil. "He stands upon a great tortoise," said the philosopher. "But the tortoise, what does he stand on?" persisted the pupil. "My son, he stands upon something, I know not what," said this very wise man, who kept the pupil waiting a thousand years before he gave his answer. Just so, the sensation of your physiologist rests upon something, he knows not what, which is nevertheless the one real and enduring thing in his changeable universe of sensation.

Again, one of your most brilliant biologists, who was called Broca, claims that all difference

between you and the brutes is a physical matter of brain organization, and that the difference between the brain of a man and that of an anthropoid ape is so small as to be immeasurable. Now the Rabbit is grateful to Broca for upholding his own modest contention that the animal has some good claim to elemental reason and morality; but he must still point out the fact that, while the difference in brain organization between the man and the ape may be so small as to be immeasurable, the difference in the life and the thoughts of the two are so great that no man has ever dreamed of measuring them. Hence the necessity of seeking some other explanation than that of brain organization and sensation to explain the phenomena of men and morals and monkeys in a reasonable universe.

To sum up this part of the Rabbit's philosophy: the profound conviction of every man that morals and matter belong to utterly different categories, that the soul or self within you is essentially different from the material world without and is not to be explained by mechanical or chemical causes, stands firmer than ever after the minute investigation of your biologists. Morals are not dependent upon brain organization, or upon sensations of pleasure and pain. They cannot be found or dissected by anatomy and chemistry, and so the Rabbit is forced to seek some deeper and more reasonable cause of their existence.

The second explanation is that offered by Darwin and some other of your great naturalists who, unlike their biological brethren, seem to have a small balance-wheel of philosophy to keep their thinking steady when they venture outside their own realm of material science. According to these naturalists, your morals are the result of a slow process of choice among animal instincts. For instance, every mother animal has two acknowledged instincts, to feed herself and to feed her offspring. Suppose now that these were the only two instincts in the animal heart, it would still be inevitable that, in times of danger or hunger, these two instincts would be brought in conflict. The mother cannot always care for herself and her offspring, and must decide which instinct she will follow. Then would follow a feeling of a greater and a lesser instinct; the mother would naturally follow the greater, and so in time there would develop a dim idea of good and evil in the animal, which is only the result of following the greater rather than the lesser instinct. In a word, motherhood itself must breed morality in the world, and that is a possible suggestion to make one reverence motherhood as the best thing which the universe has thus far produced.

To illustrate the matter specifically, the Rabbit recently watched a mother pointer who had a litter of puppies. The pointer was excessively

fond of hunting with her master; indeed, so far as men could judge, it was the greatest pleasure in her life, since she would neglect eating and everything else for the purpose of going hunting. One day the master took down his gun to go into the woods, and instantly the pointer leaped away from her puppies to join him. She ran joyfully before him across the fields; but on the edge of the woods she stopped abruptly, hesitated, and then went slowly back and threw herself down beside her puppies to feed them. Watching such an action sympathetically, the Rabbit would naturally conclude that some dim conscience, some elemental sense of duty stirred within the mother pointer; but some of your naturalists explain the whole thing by saying that mother pointers have so long followed a greater instinct that the action has now become thoughtless and habitual.

All that looks very reasonable to the Rabbit; much more so than the theory of your biologist, who explains everything by sensation and chemical action. Nevertheless, you have not altogether explained the dog's action when you call it habitual instinct. In the first place, you are not by any means sure of the truth when you say that mother animals at first followed the stronger rather than the lesser instinct. On the contrary, regarded purely as an instinct, the impulse to save oneself is probably stronger than the impulse

to care for others. In the second place, we have no right as yet to say that one instinct is higher or greater than another. That in itself asserts a previous moral judgment. To you it seems better that the dog should care for her young rather than selfishly to feed herself or to follow her own desire of going hunting; doubtless it seems better to her also; but you have not explained why, in the first place, it should seem better to you or to her to do one thing rather than the other, especially when her action interfered with an evident pleasure. In a word, you have already assumed the existence of an elementary moral sense, or conscience, which guided the animal in choosing which instinct it would follow; and it is precisely that elementary moral sense, that opposition of the will, as Kant would say, to natural egoistic impulses, which we are now trying to understand.

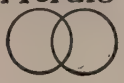
To say, with your naturalists, that morals are a matter of custom and habit only begs the whole question, and takes refuge in opinions rather than in a search for truth. Besides, the statement on the face of it is not quite true. To illustrate the matter from your own experience, you have an age-long and almost universal habit, or custom, of using your right hand rather than your left. Occasionally a boy appears using his left hand, and his companions promptly ridicule him by calling him a squaw-paw. But though he violates the

habit of a thousand centuries in using his left hand, there is no feeling aroused within him of right and wrong, but only of right and left. Only when he goes counter to moral ideas, rather than to customs or habits, does he feel what you call conscience, that is, a lack of harmony not only with his fellows, but with himself, and with some other unknown reality which he does not name. You may violate a score of human customs and feel only a cheerful indifference, but violate another and you instantly feel some new power awaken within you. Just so, the animal may go against the customs of feeding and foraging and building dens which his tribe has followed for a thousand years — as certain beavers dig a hole in the bank near deep water, instead of building a dam and prison house for themselves, as other beavers do — and the animal probably feels only a difference of opinion or habits; but the moment an animal neglects her young, or snatches food out of a weaker mouth (a thing rarely seen among wild animals, unless they are crazed by hunger and irresponsible for their actions) you feel the instant awakening of some different feeling; and judging by the animal's action, he feels it also.

So habit and custom, though they modify the morals of men and other animals, have probably nothing whatever to do with the elemental moral sense. Moreover, the Rabbit notices that you

glorify most the moral heroes who stand up and protest against certain habits and customs, and who suffer for the cause which they deem to be right. Indeed, what you call moral courage among you is chiefly a matter of opposing fixed habits in spite of all personal consequences.

There is another theory, held by many of your economists and naturalists, that your moral sense is merely a development of the social instinct. As long as the man or the animal lives alone, he is a law unto himself and has no necessity for a moral sense or conscience; for morality refers only to one's action in regard to his fellows, and so long as a man lives apart from his fellows a conscience is superfluous. But all animals, including men, are instinctively gregarious. "It is not good for man to be alone" is written also over the face of the whole animal creation. The great beasts of prey are generally solitary, simply because of the necessity of seeking their food over large areas; but the moment they find food in abundance you see the return of the social instinct. Even lions will hunt together in friendly troops, separating only when scarcity of food drives them asunder. Now the moment that animals or men gather into communities it is no longer possible for each individual to be a law unto himself; his individual will is sooner or later bound to conflict with that of others; hence the necessity of some



common standard to which all conform. So morality is a kind of sophomore society with the freshman edges rubbed off. It has, however, this added and very suggestive element, that it involves the surrender of individual liberty in view of the rights of others.

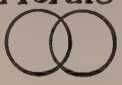
Obviously this naturalistic theory of morals proceeds on the assumption that there is no such thing as an individual moral sense, but only a social morality; and the Rabbit must question the truth of the assumption. A man is still a man and can sin against himself in the desert quite as truly as he can sin against his fellows in society. No life, however great or small, can ever merge or lose itself in a community. On the contrary, every individual stands forever in the midst of a great loneliness, and can never cross the gulf or penetrate the mystery which separates him from his nearest friend or neighbor. What social morality we possess is simply the recognition of similar traits in many different individuals.

There is a general idea among you that man alone has free will, and has, therefore, within himself the possibility of morality and immorality, according to his individual choice; that the animal has no free will, and it is therefore out of the question to speak of his having a moral sense. This leads us at once to the great question of free will and determinism, which the Rabbit has no

mind to consider in the present meditation. Whether your free will is real or only apparent does not just now concern us greatly. The point is this, that if the animal is absolutely bound, if all his actions are predetermined and free will is impossible for him, then where did you men find your own free will in the long process of evolution? Judged by your actions and by the strong feeling in your own hearts, you are apparently free. If you extend your right hand and consider it a moment, you have within you the conviction that you are absolute master of its movements; that you can turn it over or not, as you will. So of course you are free; your action is not predetermined; you alone are master of yourself. As your suffering but indomitable poet sings triumphantly:

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.
>
> It matters not how straight the gate,
> How charged with punishments the scroll,
> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

That is magnificent, the best war song ever written, since it applies to every man at every instant. But, lest you get "too sair uplifted," the Rabbit ventures to remind you that, according to the great



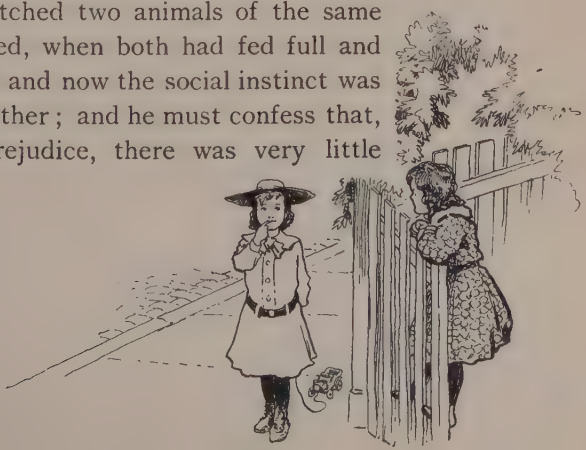
laws of force, you cannot turn even your hand over without affecting every star in the universe. Slight as the motion is, not one atom of its force is lost, but is transmitted instantly to do other work to the farthest ends of creation; and it is only a reasonable question to ask at this point, Would an all-wise Being allow a lot of irresponsible creatures to run wild, playing fast and loose with the forces that must be exactly and minutely proportioned to do the mighty work of the universe?

However, that is another brier patch. The Rabbit cheerfully grants that you are apparently free beings; and if you watch the higher orders of animals for a single hour, you must conclude that they also have some apparent freedom. They hunt or play, choose each one his own mate, eat what pleases them, make dens and nests in this place or in that, according to their individual dispositions; and it is quite absurd for you to claim a large liberty for yourself without allowing some small liberty at least to your intelligent neighbors. So, if your social life and your apparent free will have resulted in a moral standard, it is only reasonable to suppose that some simple and elementary standard, corresponding to your own, exists also among the lower orders, where the same two causes are perpetually at work.

Let the Rabbit suggest a way in which you may prove this interesting theory for yourself.

There is a little lonely child living in your street, who has been for years in the sad estate of having no companion to play with. Presently another little child moves into the same street; she also is lonely in the strange surroundings; and now you must watch and keep your eyes and your heart open. Note how shy, how cautious, is the approach of these two lonely children to each other. In each little face you note just one manifest desire, the desire to please, to make its companionship so agreeable that there shall be no more loneliness or social hunger. If these be normal children, each represses its own selfish desires and does only that which is most agreeable to the other. And, according to the social theory, this simple desire to please, which you may note in the actions of two lonely children, is the foundation of all the social life and all the moral standards which exist among you.

Before we consider the deep philosophy of your children's actions, the Rabbit must ask at this point, "Did you ever take a quiet moment to watch two lonely animals approach each other?" A score of times the Rabbit has sat quiet in the wilderness and watched two animals of the same tribe get acquainted, when both had fed full and drank at the brook and now the social instinct was drawing them together; and he must confess that, viewed without prejudice, there was very little

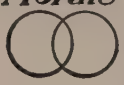


difference in the outward action of the animals and the two children. You have a dog, perhaps, which you have kept tied up or inclosed for weeks in the solitude of your back yard. If you free him now and leave him to his own devices, you will note how eagerly he seeks the companionship of his nearest dog neighbors. If he be a savage, unmannerly brute, he will proceed to growl and bite, as some other unsocial creatures do; but if he be a normal, friendly young dog, unspoiled by too much training at your hands, he will romp and play and let himself be nipped and worried, and will even share his buried bones to show his appreciation of a little friendly society. That desire to please, which some of your economists think to be the foundation of the moral order, is also strong in the animal kingdom, as you see; and whatever its results among men, it must inevitably produce some similar results among all other animals that evidently cherish the same feeling.

Reasonable as this theory appears on the surface, there are still some suggestive things which your economists have overlooked. If you think about the action of your lonely child for a moment, you must see that sooner or later she must suppress some things which she would do in a state of loneliness, and must share some little treasures freely that she would naturally keep for herself. In a word, she is consciously or unconsciously

doing the things which would please her if the other little child did them; that is, she is practicing a certain golden rule, which she never heard of, but which, I am told, marks a very high moral standard in human society. She is also proving the truth of Kant's deep philosophy, that morality arises from the opposition of the individual will to natural egoistic impulses, which she would not or could not do unless there was some previous moral feeling or instinct to guide her. So, you see, you have not reached the root of morality when you say that it arises from a social instinct and the desire to please. It would seem, rather, that the universal desire to please arises from some inner moral sense implanted in the heart of every creature. With the development of your social communities, with the growth of your reason, and especially of that love which is greatest of all things, the desire to please would grow stronger and stronger; but we can hardly escape the conviction that the desire itself is like a tree whose stalk and branches are in the free air, but whose roots are planted deep in the moral soil of your natures. Some general sense or instinct of right and wrong, of good and evil, not dependent on sensations or habits, probably lies at the root of all your social civilization.

··· Even so, you will say at once that not only some general instinct of good and evil, but also some



general ideas are essential to morality. The animals, you think, may practice something which resembles your morals; but as they are without any of your great moral ideas, of will and duty and responsibility, it is absurd to speak of their having a morality. And here you will naturally quote the definitions of some of your great philosophers, of Shaftesbury and Kant and Hegel, and of Green, the deepest of your English thinkers. The latter's definition of morals, as human action viewed in the light of absolute good, would of course exclude the animal, who has no idea of absolute good, from any true moral action or responsibility. The animal acts upon impulse, you say, and not upon the recognition of moral ideas; but you perhaps forget that your own best actions often spring from impulse, and that your impulse is at times better than your reasoning. For instance, if a man is tempted to steal and rejects the temptation after due deliberation and grave consideration of the eighth commandment, you hardly place his action on so high a plane as that of the man who, when tempted to steal, rejects the temptation instantly by a noble moral impulse. For look at it as you will, any impulse leading to a good action asserts a previous moral judgment. Your self-respect is not founded upon custom or commandment; rather is the commandment or the custom an expression of some innate self-respect.

The Rabbit must again remind you that there is a practical morality, as well as a practical reason, which is not founded upon human philosophy. Probably your child has no abstract moral ideas; neither do they seem to be necessary in view of the child's normal actions. Just so, an animal mother may be led by duty, even when she does not quite know what it is that leads her. The Rabbit is willing to admit, if you wish, that the animal is not capable of abstract moral ideas. Practically, however, the animal and the child sometimes live up to them nobly, and in all your treatises on morals and religion it is not the possession of psychological ideas, but rather of right habits, which determines your moral value.

Neither are we quite sure of our philosophy when we assert confidently that the animal has no power of abstract moral ideas. If you watch them for a little while, you must see some things to make you question the truth of your conclusion. Among the crows, for instance, it is a general habit to place a sentinel in the top of some tall tree while the flock is feeding on the ground. Such an action were hardly possible unless the crows have some abstract conception of danger. More than this, cases have been known in which a sentinel crow grew hungry and left his post, and danger approached unobserved; and the flock soon after fell upon the sentinel, who was false to his trust,

and punished him severely. And such an action is incomprehensible unless some general idea of duty also had found a place in their wise little heads.

The Rabbit also recalls the case of a certain St. Bernard dog that may give point to our philosophy. The dog was staying with his owner at a summer hotel; but, like most of his peculiar breed, he recognized only one master, and looked with utter indifference upon the coming and going of the numerous visitors. There lived that summer at the same hotel two women, a mother and daughter, who sometimes stop at the Rabbit's brier patch for a bit of cheerful philosophy. The mother has been totally blind for many years and never takes a step outside her own room without being guided by some friendly hand. The dog was never spoken to by either woman, but he was soon noticed to be watching them intently whenever they appeared; and the blind woman, feeling the dog's intent look by some unknown sense which only the blind can understand, had a strong aversion to being left alone near him. One evening, as the two women descended the hotel stairs for a walk in the twilight, the daughter felt a sudden chill in the air and left the blind mother standing alone at the foot of the steps while she hurried back to her room for a warm garment. When she returned the mother was standing where she had left her, and close beside her, with head raised so that her

hand might touch it, stood the great dog keeping guard. He not only warned others away, but in the most unmistakable manner he prevented the blind woman from moving — as she wanted to do, being frightened — until the daughter returned, when he went quietly away and lay down by himself where he had been before.

"A man," says Aristotle, "is the father of two things, his child and his action." The Rabbit is unable to explain the action of the crows with their sentinel, or of this surly dog with the helpless woman, without recognizing some apparent free will and also some moral ideas of duty and responsibility among the birds and animals.

Numerous other instances will undoubtedly suggest themselves to the Rabbit's friendly hearers who have read the records of your naturalists, or have seen many things to indicate strongly that individual animals exhibit a rudimentary moral sense; and as you measure your humanity, not by the common crowd, but invariably by your great leaders in whom you see your own powers written large, so also it is perhaps only reasonable to judge the lower orders by the exemplary animals which show the possibility, at least, of something much greater than blind instinct.

There is another very suggestive thing which we must not overlook. Among animals, as among men, the old Greek conception still holds true, that in

order to understand the individual you must study him in society. According to your Aristotle, "Human society reaches its highest development only when it is based upon a community of ideas, of good and evil, of just and unjust, that is, when society becomes a moral organism." It is remarkable how this Greek idea, of the individual as attaining his largest power when he is part of a single great organism, has taken hold of all your thinkers. No matter how many great leaders you may have, there is still among you a sense of failure and incompleteness unless your society as a whole gives a single impression of justice and right doing; nor will you ever be satisfied until society attains to that high ideal. So your great apostle wrote that your Christian society would be perfect only as each individual regarded himself as a small member of a common great body, — a lesson which the ants might have taught you, did you but open your eyes, a thousand years before the apostle preached his new philosophy.

All this you have long recognized; but what puzzles the Rabbit is that you could look upon a flock or herd of gregarious birds or animals without recognizing some dim foreshadowing of your own ideal. Again it is not a question whether or not the animals have Aristotle's abstract ideas of good and evil, of justice and injustice; the point is that every herd and flock shows the essential

characteristics of his famous Ethics and Politics. The individual members of the flock or herd seem to be guided by a common standard; such members as transgress are, like the erring members of your society, nipped or butted or crowded by others until each has a place and a right to his pasturage, until the young are protected, and the ignorant learn wisdom, and the dangerous are driven out, and those with the keenest senses are set on guard over the common safety; until at last something like rough justice and unity prevails, and the whole community is outwardly like a single organism. And all this looks to the Rabbit as if your society, with its eternal struggle for justice and unity, was the result of some inborn and universal tendency, which the animal had practiced long before you had grown reasonable enough to philosophize about it.

As for the origin of that strange moral sense, which is not dependent on sensation or habit, though it is modified by both, only two rational explanations suggest themselves. Either the moral sense was given you from without, as an addition to the gift of life, at some particular point in your development, which you can no more fix than you can determine just where in space and time the life of a seed began; or else it is a primordial principle, without age or beginning, which man learns slowly to recognize as he becomes conscious

of a self existing in relation to other selves who people the universe. Naturally, on such ground, one must avoid dogmatism and go softly; for in the origin of life or love or duty, or any other great thing, one stands forever in the shadow of a mystery. Nevertheless, if you go out into the world and examine it as if you had never seen it before, you may find a suggestion of the possible truth of the latter explanation.

Outwardly the world, whether of the brier patch or of the crowded city, seems a world of discord and aimless conflict. In nature, in history, in society, even in your own heart, are a multitude of struggling elements, which soon resolve themselves into two great forces which are forever in conflict, one force building up, the other perpetually tearing down whatsoever has been built up with pain and endless labor. All the philosophies of the world have recognized this same conflict; so the Greeks spoke of matter and ideal, the Persians of light and darkness, the Hebrews of the Creator and the adversary; so nature everywhere speaks of life and death; and all these are but symbols of the eternal struggle of two forces which you find for yourself the moment you examine your own soul or your own society.

Now if you can forget yourself for a moment and look on nature or society or the human soul in a large way, remembering the past as well as

seeing the present, you must note at once that the conflict is not equal, as it at first seemed; that in nature death is but an incident, and life perpetually triumphs over it; that in the soul or in human society the upbuilding forces are, like life itself, forever in the ascendant, and that under all the apparent discord of the world is the hum of a mighty harmony. Looking again on the struggle, you feel the inevitable tendency, which man forever feels in the presence of conflict, of throwing yourself into it, of taking part on one side or the other, and of adding your mite to the victory or to the defeat. Apparently you are free to join whichever side you will, to build up or to destroy, as you choose; but at the very instant of your choice you find that the will to determine is not so free as you had supposed. Memory insists upon being heard, recalling the good you have received from your parents and from society, and suggesting gently but firmly that your place is on the right side. All your forefathers and the fathers of your race seem to be personal once more, asking simply that whatever good they have accomplished in their long conflict be not diminished by your life and effort. Last and first of all, some strong unknown thing within you, which is neither sensation nor habit nor memory, and whose presence you cannot explain, adds an imperative voice to the appeal of your own memory and of the spirits of

your race. You may disregard all these in your alleged liberty; but the moment you do so you find that you have lost more freedom than you have gained; for freedom, in a world of law, must absolutely and forever rest in the choice of the right master; and you will never be in harmony with yourself or the universe until you enter this eternal conflict on the side whither memory and gratitude and conscience are insistently urging you. And then you stand squarely with one whom you call the Master of men, and who called himself the Son of Man, — who announced as the only purpose of his free life that he came not to destroy but to fulfill.

The Rabbit therefore ventures to add another conception of morals to the numerous definitions which you will find written in your books. Morality is the inborn sense of harmony with a law which you did not make, but which you recognize both by instinct and practice to be right and good. In more specific form it is something like this: You may perhaps have been riding on the open prairie in winter, far from home and alone, when a snowstorm swooped down upon you and blotted out the whole familiar landscape. You tug and pull at the bits, urging your unwilling horse this way and that way, now peering through the storm and gathering darkness, and now trying to lead your horse aright, until you stumble in your own footprints coming to meet you, and find with a terrible shock that you

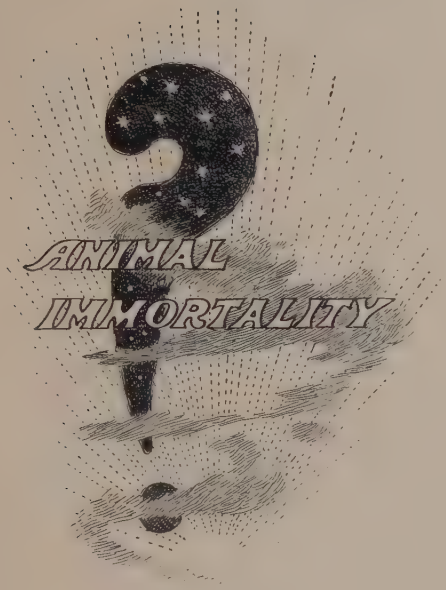
are but wandering in a blind circle of death. That is life, with sensation and habit and reason, but without the moral sense. Now let your horse alone; loosen the grip of your knees and let the reins fall free on his neck. See how he turns and wavers and swings back and forth for a moment, like a compass needle in the magnetic currents, until he holds steadily to one course. Could he speak now, he would tell you that for the first time he feels free and at ease; and so, in harmony at last with himself and with some unknown sense or guidance of direction, he plods steadily on through the storm and darkness and brings you safely home.

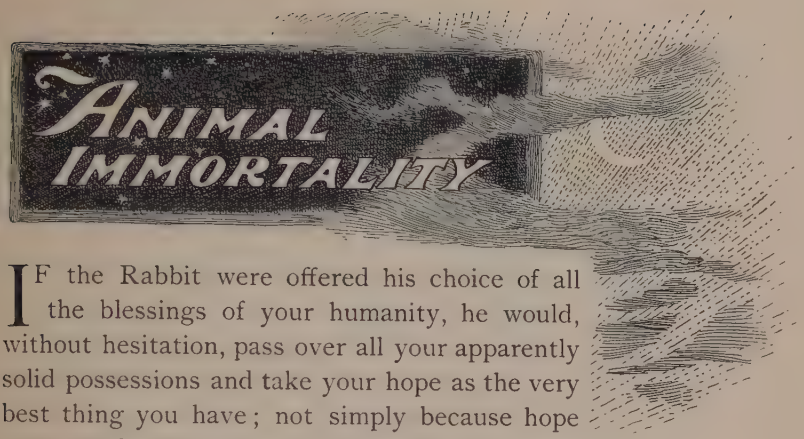
That is only the Rabbit's parable of morality. Every man of you bestrides a moral sense. You may guide and govern it sometimes, kill it with neglect, or train it intelligently by habit and reason; but in times of storm and darkness, when your eyes cannot see and your reason cannot find the trail, then give your conscience its head; trust it, and let it alone; and the way it points steadily is the way for you to go.

"But where did it come from?" you ask. The Rabbit has searched your big books of science and philosophy; he has also searched the brier patch and his own head; and the material world offers no rational explanation of the moral sense. Only as he recognizes in the world the presence of a life greater than his own, yet akin to his own life and

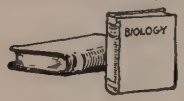
responsible for it, can he understand the phenomena of any life. There is a young oak tree out yonder, just clothing its rough limbs in a garment of beauty. The naturalist would explain the mystery of the young oak's leaves by the chemistry of the sunlight and of carbon, and by the habit of other oaks; but there is a secret hidden in the heart of a lost acorn, which would doubtless tell us, could we discover it, that all these green leaves of beauty are predetermined; that the sunlight and the rain and the laws of chemistry only aid in a process whose motive power is an inborn necessity to be an oak full-grown. And when man shows or discovers his moral nature, clothing his rough strength with a tender beauty, all sensations and habits and all social standards are but so many helps or hindrances in the way of his inborn necessity to be a full-grown man.

So, where the twilight of our philosophy vanishes into darkness, even a rabbit who knows no better worship can still gather a few rough stones for an altar to his unknown God, and wait cheerfully for more light in the morning.


ANIMAL
IMMORTALITY



IF the Rabbit were offered his choice of all the blessings of your humanity, he would, without hesitation, pass over all your apparently solid possessions and take your hope as the very best thing you have; not simply because hope seems to be the spring of all your inspirations, but for the practical reason that every great hope which has ever seriously taken possession of men has sooner or later been realized. Witness the vague hope of family to the solitary man, of government to the warring, of wisdom to the ignorant, of brotherhood and spiritual communion to the thoughtful, — all of which were but far-away and impossible hopes at one time, but which are even now before your eyes taking on more definite semblances. What the individual hopes for, and apparently loses, the race comes in time to possess. As one of your great religious poets suggested, every blessing is at first shut up in a great closed hand, which stretches over you and gives no sign of what it holds. The timid see



only a warning therein; the hard-hearted a threat; the wise remember past gifts. So the outstretched hand produces both fear and hope among you. Sooner or later it opens, and behold — such is the meaning of your history — "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing."

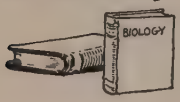
Now every individual among you reproduces, both in his physical and mental life, the whole history of his race; and since the race slowly but surely attains its hope, it is more than probable that, in the deep desire of your heart, you also shall be satisfied. That you should grow slowly but surely from embryo to full manhood, from instinct to reason, from ignorance to dawning wisdom, and then, from hope in all these symbols, that you should individually fall back into blank despair and nothingness is, upon the face of it, an imbecile conclusion. When you have built and followed a broad highway due west for a thousand years and a thousand miles, it is hardly likely that the highway will eventually turn aimlessly from its straight course and wander off into a squirrel track and climb a tree and end in a knot hole. The profoundest reasons underlie every great hope, if you but think of it a moment in the light of all past experience.

Now among all your hopes, which a thoughtful rabbit must consider as your most valuable assets, since they invariably lead you to better things than you possess, there is none that for an instant

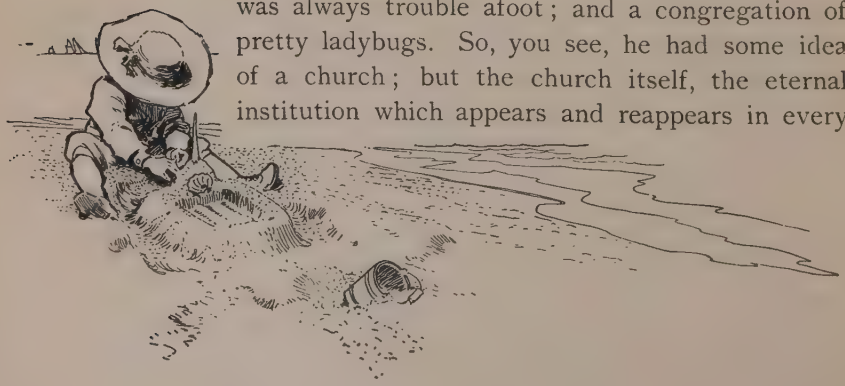
compares in value with your persistent hope in a personal immortality. Because of its very greatness it has aroused the most doubt and questioning. Indeed, that it is too good to be true is perhaps the only argument against it; and the Rabbit dismisses this cheerfully with the reflection that the same was said by your ancestors of every great and good thing that you now enjoy. There are other doubts, however, as troublesome and inconsequent as a brier in your toe, and at these the Rabbit will first glance for a moment.

Said one of your religious teachers, who tried to make his doubts as logical as his hopes, "If a man die, shall he live again?" And in sad answer to his question followed an array of visible and tangible things that only confused his insight, — such as a tree, which you might cut down with hope, because you could give water to the root and see it sprout and blossom again. But of his own life, with its thirst that only a living water could satisfy, he said that "like a cloud that vanisheth away" he would go down into Sheol and never be seen again. Therefore he could not exist, because his neighbors could no longer meet him at the gate and speak with him as of yore.

> As the river wasteth and drieth up,
> So man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?
> Till the heavens be no more he shall not awake,
> Nor be roused again out of his sleep.



To the Rabbit, who also ventures in his own way to think of these great things, that man Job, like some of your modern scientists, is unconsciously confounding the great question of immortality with the trivial matter of the conditions of immortality. He mixes up space and time, eyes and ears, riches and trouble, with the self which is independent of all these material conditions; he is like a biologist who goes astray because he cannot find a soul by anatomy, or like a young hound that gets all tangled up in a crisscross of fox tracks, while the fox himself sits watching the game from the nearest hilltop. The Rabbit has an idea in his head that, though the river dry up, not one water-drop is lost; and that, though a man disappear, he may still watch the game of life unseen from the heights. Job's whole argument against immortality reminds him of a child whom he saw recently playing on the seashore. The child had built a church of sand. He had a pointed stick for a steeple, a shell for a pulpit, in which you could always hear the murmur of far-off things; and inside the shell, for a minister, he had a bumblebee droning away. He had a choir also, of crickets and fiddler-crabs, in which there was always trouble afoot; and a congregation of pretty ladybugs. So, you see, he had some idea of a church; but the church itself, the eternal institution which appears and reappears in every



tribe and people, speaking and insisting upon an unseen order and harmony, had been sadly mixed up in the child's little head with the outward and unimportant forms and manifestations in which the church continually appears.

Such, in a word, seems to be the mental condition of those who, like Job, think or fear that the discoveries of modern science have swept away the foundations upon which rest the old, old belief in immortality, as the child with his foot brushed away the church he had created. To the Rabbit's philosophy nothing could be farther from the truth, or more unjust to the spirit of science. Like all builders among you, science must first pull down the ugly and unsightly things before it rears its own structure. It has helped to destroy some prejudices and superstitions, gross and material conceptions of life and beyond; it makes clearer and clearer the outward conditions and manifestations under which life, or spirit, here presents itself; but of the spirit itself it has destroyed nothing. Indeed, it seems to have added much by showing how much greater is the spirit's grasp of truth than we had dreamed it to be, and by showing how impossible it is for the enlarging spirit to remain satisfied by any material good, or content with any unfinished purpose. Meanwhile, as science pursues its investigations, love seems to be quite as constant as gravitation

— of which you have some questions, but no doubts — and the self in a man seems to be larger than his hand or his heart or his brain or any other instrument that it uses for the moment.

So, spite of material doubts — which have, when you come to think of them, no more to do with the real subject than has the prosperity of the wicked, which was Job's stumbling-block — the Rabbit is unmoved in his philosophy, which deals with truth apart from all prejudices, and with spirit independent of all material considerations. Of your human immortality he has no doubt whatever, though he does not give here the reasons, nor suggest a wisdom deeper than reasons, which prompt his belief. Immortality is a purely soul quality, above quantitative analysis, and therefore as far beyond the anatomy of Haeckel's biology as of Job's untrained eyes and ears. The object of the Rabbit's present meditation is to see if there be any kernel of truth in the idea of animal immortality, or rather in the vague hope, which sometimes stirs your human hearts, that certain well-loved animals may share your immortality with you.

Here it is necessary to recall to you the three stages through which you men have passed in your relation to animals. There was, first of all, the savage state, in which you lived close to the animals, understanding them better than you do

now, and in which they seem to share some of the thoughts and motives which govern your own life. The scientific stage followed, in which you were governed largely by anatomical considerations, and in which you classified and arranged the animals in species according to purely outward tokens. In this you inevitably grew away from the animal himself, and even thought for a time with Descartes that the animals were an automatic arrangement, a *bête machine,* governed by springs and involuntary impulses. Appetite pressed the button, as it were, and the springs did all the rest. The third stage, the essentially modern one, combines the characteristics of the other two; it classifies the animals outwardly, but it endeavors also to understand the life and motive of the individual animal, as the Indians do; and it finds in him, as Darwin did, the individual will and the elementary reason and morality which are more fully developed in man, but which are yet in process and which show, even in man, only a part of their full-grown power.

Now it is most interesting to the Rabbit to note that, in the first stage of your knowledge of animals, you ascribed to them not only a thought and a motive like your own, but an immortality as well. The very earliest human idea of death, as shown by your oldest records and monuments, is that of a long sleep, as the animals still regard it.

When a man died his family moved out and left him in his own house, with his weapons and the bodies of his favorite animals near him, so that when he woke he would find his familiar things ready to his hand and call. The same belief in animal immortality was manifest among the tribes that had grown scientific enough to note that the familiar bodies of things waste and fade away; for when they buried a warrior they buried also his dog and his horse beside him. So also when the belief in immortality had grown a little more spiritual, the animals still shared it with their masters. It was thought that the self, or soul, could not exist independent of the body; so the body of the dead man was embalmed in order that the soul might still have a habitation, an "always house," as the old Egyptians called it. For the same reason they embalmed the bodies of animals whom they had learned to love, and whom, from daily association and companionship, they thought necessary to their future happiness.

So far this human belief, that certain animals have the power or gift of immortality, may be a purely selfish one. The animals are necessary to man's happiness, here and elsewhere, and so the god that provides for the man remembers his happiness by providing for his animals also.

Here is another and entirely different philosophical question, the question of Hedonism, or of

happiness as an end in all life. The Rabbit does not venture to settle the question, but merely suggests that, since in both man and animal every power of heart and mind and body brings happiness by its legitimate use, it is only rational to suppose that ultimate happiness is the end of all life. There can be nothing selfish, therefore, in applying it to both men and animals. Certainly the happiness sought by those primitive men included the happiness of their animals also, who enjoyed the chase as much as their masters. The Indians' Happy Hunting Grounds would be but cheerless places without something to hunt, and without a few good dogs as hunting companions; and the Indians, who were more direct and thoughtful than you have supposed, gave even to the hunted animal the joy of waking again after the hunt, strong and vigorous and free, rejoicing in his powers like a buck that springs up, alert and defiant, at the voice of a hound on his trail. So the Indians still, when they kill a bear, make an offering to his spirit to show that they are all friends and brothers and sharers of a common lot, in which each is happy in his own way.

Your Anglo-Saxon forefathers had the same idea of the animal as your Indians. Their horses and dogs, and even the wolves and bears that they hunted, shared their immortality. The horses ridden by the immortal Valkyr maidens and by the warriors of Valhalla were not special creations, but the

very horses that they had once ridden and loved upon earth.

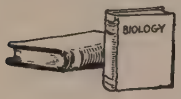
In India the belief in animal immortality took a higher form. In the Hindu philosophy there are no disembodied spirits. Every animal and every man is the house of a pure spiritual being, and when the body is destroyed the spirit takes up his abode in another animal form, more noble or more base according to whether the spirit is to be rewarded for his loyalty or punished for his disregard of the law that should govern him in every form in which he exists.

In the second or scientific stage of your knowledge of animals all this enormous belief of your forefathers was forgotten. You studied the animal anatomically, his skin and his bones and his teeth, and you had no regard whatever for any thoughts or hopes that went on inside his head. Many of your scientists studied men in the same way, and swept aside their immortality with scant consideration. Said one of your great biologists, "All things are determined by anatomy; the soul is of no consequence." From his purely material viewpoint, and in his present contemplation of childish things, the biologist is of course right; but we are just learning that there is a science of mind, not to be reached by anatomy, calling for a deeper and more subtle analysis; and in a century or two men may be studying thought and feeling as carefully

"Like a buck that springs up, alert and defiant, at the voice of a hound on his trail"

as they now study skeletons and microbes. For the present, at least, your scientific stage seems to have added nothing and taken nothing away from the idea of immortality, either for men or animals. It has been busy with outward and material things, and honestly and openly neglectful of the soul quality upon which any rational opinion of immortality must be based.

As men enter the third stage, and find not only the law of species but some suggestion of the law of mind in the lower orders, the old question of animal immortality is revived. One reason, perhaps, why it was not revived earlier and with more vigor is because the religious teachers of your modern civilization are — so it seems to the Rabbit — still too much influenced by the crude ideas of the Hebrew religious writers. Now the Jews knew little and cared less about animals, having other things to engage their whole attention. Like all Semitic peoples, their only division of the animals was into clean and unclean, — clean animals which they might eat and offer to their God, and unclean which they must avoid or destroy. Among all the peoples of the earth they were almost alone in claiming no immortality for themselves, to say nothing of their animals; and whatever ideas of immortality they borrowed came to them, much later than Job and Ecclesiastes, from the Greek conception of the eternal life of the pure soul and from the Persian



conception of the resurrection of the body. The Christian Church, with new reasons and inducements of its own, has accepted the idea of immortality for itself, and has, more than all other agencies combined, spread the glad hope of immortality over the earth; but with the animal it has had little to do directly. Its reverence for tradition has even kept it strangely silent in the face of the Jewish idea that a sinful man might offer an innocent lamb to the God who made them both, under the supposition that the lamb had no rights to its own life, and that its death might influence the God's judgment upon the man's sins. A preposterous supposition, as the Rabbit and all the prophets think of it; but it kept its place among the golden treasures in the new house of the Christian faith, and there was no Hezekiah to rise up and call it *Nehushtan*, a piece of brass, as it deserved.

Of late, however, men are everywhere asking the old question of animal immortality over again. There have been many tribes of men who denied immortality to their women, while cherishing it for themselves and their horses. Only as the race grew in civilization were the rights of women recognized, until men are now inclined to base their future hopes upon their wives and mothers, rather than upon their own virtues; and it was inevitable that, as civilized men enlarged their charity and their experience, they should consider the rights of the

animal and even give a thought to his future. Hardly a man has ever owned a noble dog without feeling at times some dim hope or desire that he might find the same love and loyalty to meet him and believe in him in the other world. It is not a question of mere selfish enjoyment for the man; the hope has something more generous and noble in it; and so the Rabbit ventures to regard it for a moment without prejudice.

First of all, the Rabbit has no use for dogs, and unless they change their natures radically he would be himself content with a heaven or a brier patch in which they did not exist to trouble him. This will suggest at once that the question is not a personal one at all; it does not depend upon one's like or dislike for certain animals, or upon a woman's overweening affection for a poodle. There have been primitive peoples who believed their dead lived as long as they were remembered; therefore they built monuments, and perpetuated the name of a man, or the name of a favorite animal, by giving the same name to all his descendants. Such a conception does more justice to your affection than to your reason. Immortality, if indeed there be such a splendid thing, must rest upon better foundations than that; it must be inherent in the nature of mind itself, independent of all personal judgment.

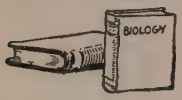
Now the Rabbit has pointed out, in a previous meditation, that there is no such thing as an animal

psychology any more than there is an animal gravitation. Any law which you find in your own mind must apply to any mind in the universe, wherever you find it. Since, according to your greatest naturalists and also according to your own observation, the animals have rudimentary minds, the only rational or possible way to consider the question of animal immortality is simply to look in your own minds, to see what there is in them to warrant the immortal hope, and then lay precisely the same judgment upon the rudimentary mind of the animal.

There is, for instance, the moral argument. You find in yourselves the sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, and upon your daily practice according to your knowledge many of your theologians base the idea of a "conditional" immortality. Now most of the animals have a sense of right and wrong, and generally live well up to their knowledge. Whether or not the animal has an abstract conception of ultimate and absolute good is another question, which has nothing whatever to do with the point at issue, since none of you would be willing to stake your child's future bliss upon his possession of any abstract conceptions. Sometimes, in the abnormal life to which you have subjected some of the animals, this sense of right and wrong is largely a matter of training; but even so, your animals generally do willingly what they were trained to do, and often do it of themselves without

compulsion, even when their own desires would lead them another way, — which is more than can be said, for instance, of certain of your young men who go to college and there break away from the rational habits into which you have trained them diligently. With the wild animals this rudimentary sense of right and wrong seems to be inborn, as it is in yourselves. All gregarious animals and birds have certain social habits and regulations which, in a tribe of primitive men, would be said to rest upon moral standards; and though their knowledge be small, it must be said honestly of them that they live up to the knowledge better, and have a far smaller proportion of wrong-doing, than a community of men.

Watch even your pet dogs. They act guilty when they have done a thing that you have taught them is wrong. Or better still, since it exists in most animals and is entirely independent of your influence, watch a big dog when he finds a little dog with a bone. He is hungry; he wants the bone; he is stronger than the owner, and he does not know that you or any one else is watching him. Yet rarely, very rarely indeed, will he use his superior strength to take the bone that belongs to another. Occasionally he disregards this universal animal law, and then, if you watch closely, you will often see a curious and suggestive thing, namely, that the big animal, with his enormously



superior strength, is still half afraid to use it, and judged by his plain actions, he seems to have a dim idea in his head that a small dog with right on his side is more formidable than a big dog who is clearly in the wrong. And all the small dog's actions, as he stands his ground and growls bravely in the teeth of a robber ten times his size, seem to suggest the same interesting moral conclusion.

Now if there be any ultimate judge, and any final and far-reaching judgment of good and evil, what will an honest God say to an animal that does right so far as he knows?

Again, there is the argument of personality. Though your whole body changes rapidly from year to year, there is in you a persistent ego that grows in wisdom, that survives all the body's changes, and that remains itself continually. Such a personal force is probably as indestructible as any other force, which may change its outward manifestation, but which can never be destroyed; and so, since it persists through ten or seventy years of change, through all the years and the centuries the personal self must exist independent of all changes. Now the body of your favorite old dog has changed and entirely passed away at least a dozen times since you owned him, yet he still answers to the same name and undoubtedly thinks of himself as the same dog, without ever once getting his consciousness mixed up with that of the

pup or the cat or the parrot. The Rabbit does not here venture into the question of how far an animal may be conscious of his ego. The whole point is this, that whatever argument you apply to yourself applies in some small measure to your animals also.

Then there is the argument of reappearances, of disembodied spirits which return to earth and make their presence known to the physically living. An enormous number of such phenomena have been or are being investigated by your scientific societies; and casting out all the cases of fraud and mistake and pure imagination, a large residue remains which cannot be accounted for by any known laws or experience. To some of you — and there are few finely organized men or women who do not cherish some personal experience of this kind — this is a very real argument for immortality. The Rabbit does not examine it here to see just how much it proves or leaves unproved; he simply points out the fact that, according to your records, the dog is often the first to recognize the presence of the unseen; and that, among the residue of these spirit appearances, there are some of birds and animals that were known to be dead. And the Rabbit wonders by what fine lines of distinction your logicians will cast these out, while keeping the others that rest upon the same evidence.

Then there is the greatest argument of all, the argument of incompleteness itself, — of children

dying, of lives disappointed, of hopes unrealized, of wisdom that glimpses a truth only to lose it. Wheresoever you turn you see a glorious promise suddenly broken off, without any earthly explanation; and your sorrow is increased by the fact that, to finish the course splendidly, as it was begun, you do not need any other mind than the one you have — for the mind, just as it is in you, could live a million years as well as so many moments — but only a new material instrument called the body to work and play with. And to think that man can see all this possible truth and beauty and happiness, and stretch out his hands towards it, and then be thrust back brutally into nothingness, is too monstrous a conception to hold for one instant in the face of a rational universe.

The animal's life is also incomplete, more so than your own, when you come to think of it. The animal also knows life and the joy of it; he begins to see dimly some reason in it, perhaps; certainly he takes care of himself and his little ones better and better, and gets more out of life as the slow years roll over his head. And then, when life is best worth keeping, age steals upon him, and he sees youth and gladness passing away, and his poor wisdom avails him nothing to stay the things that he loves. So far as a prayer can be without words, the animal's whole life and effort is a prayer for more life, and for the good of life as

he knows it. To quote a single instance out of a thousand, the Rabbit knows a certain hawk — one of the kind that mates for life — that mourned all summer and died of a broken heart because his mate was killed by a thoughtless boy. And such incompleteness, even in lowly forms, may be remembered if there be any great Love or Wisdom overlooking the universe, as your teachers declare.

There are many other arguments and indications of your own immortality; but the Rabbit leaves them all with only the suggestion that, when you consider them, you apply them without prejudice to all those whom St. Francis and the Indians call your little brothers, and draw your own conclusions fearlessly. So far as your reasons seem to transcend the hard logic of Aristotle, and so far as your feeling seems to transcend your reason, your fault will probably be that you will have too little rather than too great a faith; for the thought of your God is undoubtedly larger and even kinder than your own. And so it is written, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the Lord." At times, to both man and animal, the whole question seems to be just this, Are you a brain, composed entirely of albumen and phosphates, or are you something greater, — a self, which uses the brain, as it uses the hand, for its own outward manifestation? If you are just brain, if there is nothing in your sense of duty but albumen, and nothing in your

love but phosphates, then you scatter to the elements and are lost; but if you are mind, then, so far as we can know or reason, no fire can burn or water drown or any death affect you in the least.

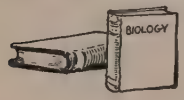
For yourself, as you see, it is not a question of how you could live again, but rather a reasonable certainty of your present mind's indestructibility by any known forces. Neither is it a question of surviving another change, since those through which you have already passed safely are probably greater than any that awaits you. If you could have spoken clearly just before you were born into the world, you would have said that life was impossible outside the conditions that then seemed essential. And it is perhaps even harder to comprehend that this wise and saddened man or woman, looking forward with troubled eyes on death, is the same little child that once looked forward on life with eager expectation. All that was mortal of that child passed away half a century ago; the mind only remains itself, and has already ten times proved its immortality. Birth is infinitely harder to understand than continued life without physical hindrances. That the ideal should be manifest in matter, that any divine word should take upon itself the burden of the flesh, is still to us, as it was to Plato and St. John, the only mystery. That it should continue forever to be the ideal, the unchanging word, is as certain as the constancy of God or as the persistence of

your personality through seventy years of incessant changes.

"But," you say in doubtful wonder, "if all the animals and all the men that ever lived are to live again, there would be no room on the earth for us all."

Such an objection only shows how much we are bound by material considerations, and how difficult it is for the carnal brain to understand heavenly things. Before you go astray on that trail you must first ponder the problem of how many angels could stand on the tip of a needle, or how many thoughts could fully occupy a cubic inch of space, — which is not so absurd as the histories of the Middle Ages would have you believe, since it brings to a fine point the whole immeasurable distance between matter and spirit. Besides, from even the materialistic viewpoint, if you look above your head any bright night, you will see a million worlds, each larger than your own. There is certainly nothing unreasonable in the supposition that among all these shining worlds the Rabbit could find one pleasant little brier patch sufficient for his needs, without crowding or disturbing any of his spiritual neighbors.

So far, then, as the animal seems to you to possess a rudimentary mind, you may reasonably claim for him some small chance for immortality. Every animal, as well as every man, reproduces in himself



from birth to death the whole history of his race; and the history of any race seems to be an upward striving, through pain and loss, to more and more perfect things. Where the process began, where mind emerged from matter, or first clothed itself in matter, the Rabbit does not know, but leaves the question cheerfully to One who was probably present with the morning stars, and whose action has been reasonable and constant ever since. It seems, however, that the process, once begun and long continued, can never end rationally until "the desire of every living thing" for more life shall be accomplished.

Thus far the Rabbit has tried to examine the question impersonally; but there is another reason which he knows in his heart, though he finds no words deep enough to tell his meaning. Death to the animal is but a sleep, and the only thought in his head when he lies down for the last time is Nature's whisper that he will waken as usual when the right time comes. Now Nature deceives nobody, nor does she long tolerate any deception. It would be most irrational, even for a rabbit, to suppose that Nature has told him truth every hour of his long life, only to whisper a falsehood at the last moment.

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